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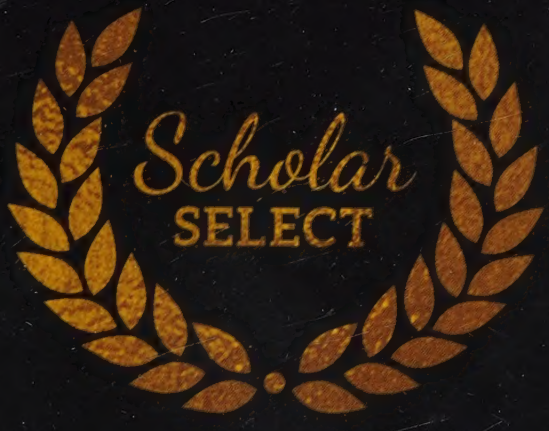

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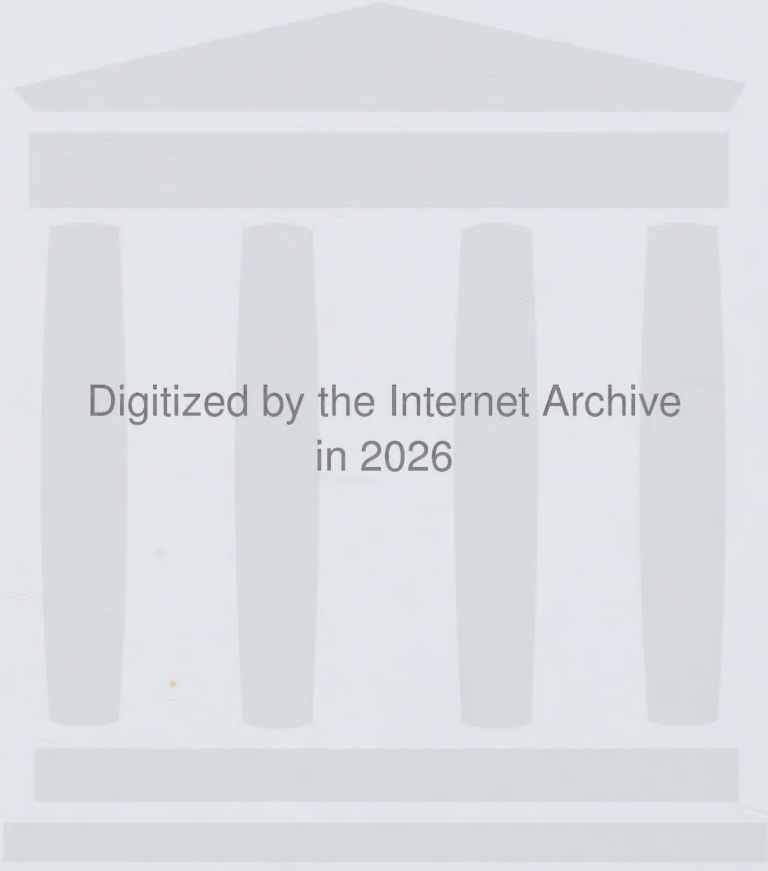
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The Legend of Sir Perceval

Studies upon its Origin Development, and Position in the Arthurian Cycle

By

Jessie L. Weston

Vol. II

The Prose Perceval according to the Modena MS

London

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To the Memory

OF

GASTON PARIS

WHOSE GENIUS, REVERENCE FOR TRUTH IN RESEARCH,
AND GENEROUS APPRECIATION OF THE LABOURS
OF OTHERS, WILL BE HELD IN LASTING
REMEMBRANCE, THESE STUDIES
ARE INSCRIBED

PREFACE

In presenting this second volume of my *Perceval* Studies to my readers I feel that a few words of explanation as to the quite unexpected development of the subject are necessary.

When I formed the project of editing the Modena *Perceval* it was with the underlying impression that, though the publication of the text was necessary in the interests of the criticism of the *Perceval* literature, yet that it was unlikely to furnish material for either a long or particularly interesting study. It is always the unexpected that happens: before I had been long at work I recognised that we had here most important evidence as to the nature of the sources utilised, evidence which threw an entirely new light on the question of the Borron authorship.

For my own part I had no clear idea as to the connection of Borron with the romances which passed under his name; as I stated some years ago, in my *Lancelot* Studies (p. 126 and note), I believed that Borron really had

composed a cycle of romances, which formed the model for the later and more extended cyclic forms, but I was by no means sure that the text, as we now possess it, was to be considered his work. His name was too persistently connected with Arthurian romantic development to be set aside altogether; it was difficult to believe that such a text as the Didot, our only available version, really represented that cycle; I had very little hope of solving this much discussed problem.

And if, when I began my studies, I did not foresee that I should eventually formulate a theory which would precisely, and definitely, ascribe the entire cycle, *Perceval* included, to Borron, I still less foresaw that I should venture to offer a fully developed theory of the origin and development of the Grail legend; a theory which should cover the whole ground, and explain at once the nature of the Grail; the origin of the story, as we possess it; which should offer an interpretation of its incidents, and terminology; and which should provide us with definite material for the comparison and co-ordination of the conflicting versions—and yet it is this, and no less than this, which I have attempted in the following pages!

I am fully sensible of the responsibility attaching to such an assertion; where so many have failed it seems presumptuous indeed to claim to have succeeded! Had

I not been in the possession of certain definite information, unknown to my predecessors, I should not have ventured to go as far as I have done. Nor has the step been taken without full consideration.

For some years past I have myself been fully convinced of the direction in which the true solution of the problem was to be sought, and that that solution would be one which lay midway between the purely Folklore, and the purely Ecclesiastical standpoint; but for long my evidence was incomplete; I do not even now claim that all the links in my chain are of unimpeachable strength, but the *ensemble* was so striking that I felt myself justified in putting it into literary form, and submitting it to the judgment of competent scholars. Chapter x. has been read through by M. Bédier, M. Ferdinand Lot, and Dr. W. A. Nitze, and the independent verdict of each was that the evidence should be made public without loss of time.

Of course I do not expect that views so unfamiliar, and in some respects so revolutionary, should at once be accepted in their entirety, but the facts are there, and every student of these subjects should be in possession of them, and decide for himself whether or no their connection with the Grail legend and literature be indeed that postulated in the text.

I am the more encouraged in making this attempt by the reception accorded to Volume I.; I there made many

suggestions, novel, and perhaps, somewhat daring, which have been very fully examined and criticised. Faults and defects have, of course, been pointed out, but there has been a much greater disposition to accept the general lines of my argument than I had ventured to expect. Arthurian criticism is undoubtedly moving forward, and showing itself more lenient, and less rigid, than of old.

To profess, however, to have solved, at once, the problems of the Borron authorship and of the Mystery of the Grail, is, I freely admit, a most daring claim, and one which must tax the generosity of my critics to the utmost; but it is the remorseless logic of evidence which has forced me into this position. In the following pages that evidence is fully set forth; I can only interpret it in one way, it is quite possible that some may interpret it in another; in any case I feel sure that my fellow-scholars will not blame me for placing it at their disposal.

My thanks for being enabled to do so in so full a form are due first to Signor Carta, and the direction of the Biblioteca Estense, for their kind permission to copy, and publish, the text of the *Perceval*;[1] and then to M. Paul Meyer, who most kindly undertook to revise the proofs, and advise me as

[1] It is due to Professor Camus to record the fact that, but for the accidental loss of the copy made by him for the late M. Gaston Paris, he, and not I, would have been the editor of the text.

to the best method of presentment. I also owe M. Bédier thanks for having kindly gone through my proposed reconstruction of the postulated verse original, and for advice and criticism thereupon—advice and criticism which I have not always followed, being fully persuaded that Messire Robert de Borron was a less accomplished scholar than is M Joseph Bédier, and that verse-forms rigidly disallowed by the one would certainly have passed muster with the other!

Lastly, and I almost think chiefly, my thanks, and I have little doubt those of my readers also, are due to the friend who desires to remain anonymous, but to whose personal and practical acquaintance with certain unusual branches of study I owe it that I am here enabled to suggest a solution of the Secret of the Grail.

PARIS, *November* 1908.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE romance which we are about to examine, although it presents questions no less important for the critical study of the Arthurian cycle than does the poem of Chrétien de Troyes (the subject of the previous volume), yet presents these problems in a far simpler and less bewildering form. Instead of a poem of abnormal length, and differing authorship, we are here dealing with a short prose romance, the work of one hand, though whose that hand, is yet a debated point. Instead of sixteen MSS., scattered over the British Isles and the Continent, and found as far north as Edinburgh, as far south as Florence, we have only two, one in Paris, and one in Modena: and whereas the Chrétien MSS. differ considerably the one from the other, and demand careful grouping and analysis, these two manifestly represent one and the same original form.[1]

Thus the material with which we are dealing is comparatively simple, and the problems involved comparatively few, but they are not for that less far-reaching in their effect,

[1] In view of the very decided superiority of the M. text, I think we should cease to speak of this romance as the 'Didot' *Perceval*. With practical unanimity scholars have agreed to substitute the title of *Perlesvaus* for that of *Perceval le Gallois*, as applied to our other *Perceval* prose text; no confusion can thus arise if we refer to the romance here dealt with as the prose *Perceval*.

rather, the more closely the romance is studied the clearer grows the conviction that we are here touching the very heart of the Grail problem, whereas Chrétien's poem, far more important from a literary point of view, lies only on the outer edge.

Briefly, the problem of the prose *Perceval* falls under two heads: (*a*) is the romance a working over of a poem by Robert de Borron, or is it a later attempt to supply the lack of such a poem? (*b*) if the work of Borron, whence did he derive his material?

In both MSS. our text follows the *Joseph of Arimathea*, and the *Merlin*, being connected with this latter without break or introduction of any kind; it is indeed by no means certain where the *Perceval* should properly be held to begin. These two romances are found without the *Perceval*; they also exist in a verse form, complete in the case of the *Joseph*, incomplete in that of the *Merlin*; the verse form agreeing so closely with the prose that there is no doubt as to the one being a working over of the other. The verse MS. gives the name of Robert de Borron as the author, an ascription omitted in certain of the prose MSS., curiously enough, in both of those which contain the *Perceval*. It is very clearly stated that the poems are designed to form part of a cycle, although as to the component parts of that cycle the writer expresses himself with much obscurity.

The question before the critics ever since the publication of the texts[1]—the verse form by Francisque Michel in 1841, the prose by Hucher in 1874—has been whether Borron completed his work, or not; and whether the *Perceval* can be considered as being (what the *Joseph* and

[1] *Le Roman du Saint Graal*, Bordeaux, 1841; *Le Saint Graal*, Le Mans, 1874. The *Perceval* text will be found in vol. i. of this latter,

Merlin certainly are) the prose rendering of Borron's poem.

The scholars who have essayed a constructive analysis of the literature of the cycle have expressed themselves very differently upon the point. Professor Birch-Hirschfeld[1] held that the *Perceval* was the genuine work of Robert de Borron, and placed the trilogy, *Joseph*, *Merlin*, *Perceval* at the head of the Grail cycle. The late M Gaston Paris,[2] in the Introduction to his edition of the Huth *Merlin*, expressed his concurrence with this opinion. Mr. Alfred Nutt,[3] on the other hand, decided against Borron's authorship, and placed the *Perceval* at the end of the cycle. The late Professor Heinzel expressed himself in somewhat dubious terms alike as to authorship and position.[4] Professor Wechssler is in favour of Borron's authorship, and moreover, credits him with connecting Perceval with the story.[5]

In my *Lancelot* studies, published in 1901, I expressed my opinion that Borron had really composed a trilogy, and that the *Perceval* must be considered as the earliest cyclic *Quest*.[6]

In the first section of Dr. Brugger's important study on the *Enserrement Merlin*[7] the writer goes with great detail

[1] *Die Sage vom Gral*, 1877, cf. chaps. v. and vii.

[2] *Merlin*. Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1886, vol. i. p. ix.

[3] *Studies in the Legend of the Holy Grail*, 1888, p. 94.

[4] *Ueber die Alt-Franz. Gral-Romanen*, 1891, pp. 88, 89. Professor Heinzel considered the *Perceval* a later redaction, after the appearance of another Grail poem.

[5] *Die Sage vom Heil. Gral*, 1898, p. 124.

[6] *Legend of Sir Lancelot*, p. 126. (Grimm Library, xii.)

[7] *L'Enserrement Merlin*. (*Zeitschrift fur Franz. Sprache*, vol. xix., pp. 68 *et seq.*) This is the most important constructive study of the 'ensemble' of the Arthurian romances which has appeared of recent years. Dr. Brugger perhaps goes beyond what is justified by our present knowledge of the texts, but his suggestions are most helpful.

into the subject of the relation of the different romances. On the question of the authorship of the prose *Perceval* he expresses himself very guardedly, deciding neither for nor against Robert, but suggesting that a careful examination of sources will probably shew that the work, in the form in which we possess it, is partly due to Robert, partly to a redactor. In fact, that Borron probably wrote a *Perceval*, but that the work has only reached us in a mutilated form. In point of date he places the Borron trilogy at the head of the cyclic development of the Arthurian literature, thus reaching, by a different road, the same conclusion as I had previously arrived at. Further, Dr. Brugger attaches great importance to the prose redaction, which he holds to be the earliest French prose romance. He worked under difficulties, having only the Didot form of the *Perceval* text at his command; as he justly observes (p. 69), this is an extremely poor piece of work; had the far superior Modena text been available the conclusions reached would probably have been essentially the same, but they would have been more firmly grounded.

We are, therefore, dealing with a question in regard to which scholars of equal standing have expressed the most widely differing opinions. And, indeed, the material at our disposal has hitherto been so scanty that anything in the nature of a definite, and authoritative, conclusion was hardly to be looked for. With the publication of the Modena text, however, the enquiry enters upon another stage, and if the proofs be not absolutely decisive, we shall, I think, find strong presumptive grounds in favour of the genuine Borron authorship. But before proceeding to examine our material it will be well to state briefly in what that material consists.

The prose *Perceval* has been preserved to us in two

MSS. only; for many years we knew of but one, that which went by the name of the 'Didot' MS. from its former possessor, M. Firmin-Didot, at whose death it was purchased by the Bibliothèque Nationale, where it is catalogued as Nouv. Acq. 4166, *Fonds Franç.* Our text occupies the last 33 folios, 93 v. to 126, and, as noted above, is preceded by the *Joseph of Arimathea* and the *Merlin.* The MS, dated 1301, is evidently the work, either of an incompetent copyist or of one who had an illegible text before him. It shews numberless errors, mis-spellings, and mistaken readings, and, moreover, for the most part, gives a very condensed version. It is most unfortunate that until now this has been our only available source of information for this branch of the Arthurian cycle.

The second MS., that of Modena, was first made known to the public by Professor Rajna, in his edition of *Carduino*,[1] and was fully described by Camus in his catalogue of the French texts in the Biblioteca Estense.[2] A copy was made by Signor Camus for the late M. Gaston Paris, but unfortunately after his death this copy could not be traced. By the kind permission of the Direction of the Biblioteca Estense I am now enabled to publish the text from a copy made by me in 1906. The *Perceval* occupies approximately the same number of folios as in the 'Didot,' *i.e.* 44 v. to 74 v., but the MS. being somewhat larger (M. 31 by 21½ *cent.*, D 238 by 170 *mill.*), the 'contenu' of Modena is proportionately more. The text is well written, and is evidently a close transcript of the original. It must, moreover, be very close to the primitive form of the prose

[1] *Poemetti Cavallereschi*, Bologna, 1873.

[2] *Notices et extraits des MSS. Franç. de Modena*, 1891, p. 47, the numbering of the MSS. has been altered more than once since that date, the *Perceval* had been changed to E. 39 (Q. L. 9. 30.) when I copied it.

text, but that it is not the original text is proved by a comparison with D., which, though on the whole a much abridged version, shews an occasional *plus* against M. That both derive from a common original there can be no shadow of doubt. The MS., like the Didot, also contains the *Joseph* and the *Merlin*. It was assigned by Signor Camus, and later by W. Hoffmann,[1] to the 14th century; the handwriting, however, appeared to me to be somewhat earlier, and when copying the text I referred the question to Signor Carta, the Librarian, who examined it carefully, and alike from the character of the writing, and that of the illuminated capitals, decided that it was of the latter part of the thirteenth century. M. is thus earlier than, as well as superior to, D.

Besides these texts we also possess, in the printed editions of the prose *Tristan*, and in MS. B. N. 103, *Fonds Franç.* on which the earlier printed editions are based, an abridged *résumé* of certain adventures of the prose *Perceval*; this section is here printed from the MS. referred to. The incidents are so summarily treated as to be of little value for critical purposes, but the extract possesses one feature of interest. The adventure of Perceval with the Hermit, with which the extract closes, forms no part of the prose *Perceval*, but is found in the romance known as the *Prophecies of Merlin*. In the *Merlin* MS. of the Library of San Marco[2] this romance, in a different handwriting, follows immediately on the Borron *Merlin*, at the point of the election of Arthur, thus occupying the same position as that filled by the prose *Perceval* in MSS. D. and M. The *Tristan* abstract is manifestly drawn from two sources, as in the first part, that derived from the *Perceval*, the name

[1] *Die Quellen des Didot Perceval*, 1905.

[2] *Cod. Franç.*, App. xxix (lxvii. 9. Contarini).

of the hero's father is given as Alain le Gros, which is, of course, correct; in the concluding adventure, derived from the *Prophecies*, it is Pellinor. The question of the 'provenance' of this text is interesting: did the writer of the *Tristan* know a MS. in which both romances were included, or was the *Perceval*, as a *Suite Merlin*, superseded by the *Prophecies*?

Borel, in his *Trésor d'Antiquités*[1] knew, and used, a *Merlin* MS. which contained the *Perceval*. He gives fairly long citations from it, and it is clear that it was either our D. text, or one very closely akin to it. It agrees with D. in some of the important passages, *e.g.* that which relates to the omissions of the 'trovéors'; that which describes the appearance of the Grail, and Perceval's question as to its use; and replaces *François*, by *Romains*, in the account of the combat between Arthur and Frollo. But we cannot absolutely identify it, as Borel says that the MS. he used belonged to M. Conrad, whilst the D. Text is bound in parchment bearing the arms of the Chancellor d'Agues-seau.

There is also in the *Biblioteca Estense*,[2] the fragment of a *Tristan* MS., in which the Fisher King gives his name to Tristan as Brons; bearing in view the extract above referred to, it seems probable that the first compilers, or copyists, of the prose *Tristan* used the genuine Borron cycle, which was afterwards discarded for the longer, pseudo-Borron, form. This is all the evidence with regard to the prose *Perceval* which I have so far been able to discover.

A few words in regard to the method employed in preparing the text for publication are necessary. The folio Nos. of M. are given as they occur in the body of

[1] *Trésor d'Antiquités Gauloises et Françoises*, Paris, 1655.

[2] Cf. Camus, p. 53.

the text. Those of D. will be found in the margin. It seemed to me that this would give a better idea of the relation between the texts than to follow, as Hoffmann has done, the pagination of the printed edition. The manner in which the actual variants of the texts might be shown was a question of great difficulty. The texts are practically the same, and yet the variants are so frequent, and often so important that the employment of italics, or brackets (the plan I first adopted), only confused the reading. In the interest of the text itself, which is a very good and clear piece of prose, I decided, on M. Paul Meyer's advice, to print it without any other indication than the folio Nos., postfixing a specimen extract from D. that the general character of the variants might be apparent. Any actual variance of fact, names or numbers, I have placed in the footnotes; but these were originally drawn up in connection with the indications of omission in the body of the text, which are now, as said above, removed. The fact that the text of D. is easily accessible in Hucher's edition rendered very detailed references unnecessary, but in the final, *Mort Artus*, section, the two texts should be used together, as here D. supplements M.; the original version must have treated all this section with great elaboration of detail. A critical text I have in no way attempted; as we shall see, there are reasons why the apparently capricious methods of the scribe of M. should be preserved. That the text is one of extreme interest and value for critical purposes will, I think, be generally admitted.

THE
LEGEND OF SIR PERCEVAL

MODENA MANUSCRIPT

(Fo. 44 *d*). Quant Artus fu sacrés et le messe fu cantée, si issirent tot li baron del mostier, si esgarderent, et ne virent pas le perron, si ne sorent que il fu devenus. Ensi fu Artus esleus[1] a roi et tint le terre et le regne de Logres lonc tans en pais.[2] Quant Artus fu[3] fais rois et le messe fu cantée, si s'en revint arriere a son palais, et tot li baron qui l'espée li avoient veüe esracier dou perron. Dont vint Merlins après ceste eslection a la cort, et quant li baron le virent qui le counissoient, si en firent mult grant joie, et Merlins parla a aus et lor dist: 'Segnor, or entendés a çou que je vous dirai. Je vuel bien que vous saciés que Artus,[4] qui vous avés receu a roi, fu fius a Uter Pandragon vostre segnor lige et la roine Ygerne, et quant il fu nés si commanda li rois qu'on le me baillast. Si tost comme je l'euc je le portai Entor,[5] por çou que je le savoie preudome, et il le garda volentiers por les grans biens que

[1] et sacrez.

[2] de molt amplez.

[3] quant il fu coronez et l'en li ot fait toutes ses droitures, si l'en menerent en son pais (*sic*), et Key le seneschal aveuc lui et autres barons une grant partie qui estoient illuec assemblez por voir qui l'espee porroit del perron arrachier.

[4] Not named.

[5] Antor.

je dis qu'il en auroit. Et ensi com je le dis si l'a il veü, car il a fait de Keu[1] son fil senescal. (45 *a*) Et li rois dist: 'Ce ai mon (*sic*) ne jamais a ma vie nen ert getés.' A ceste parole fu mult grans li joie et tout li baron en furent liés, et meisme Gavains q'estoit fius sa seror et fils au roi Lot.

Après cest afaire si commanda li rois que on fesist les tables tot maintenant drecier, et on si fist, et s'asisent tot au mangier parmi le sale, et furent mult ricement servi, et orent quanqu'il volrent commander. Quant li baron orent mangié si osterent li garçon et li serjant les tables, et se leverent li baron, et s'en vinrent au roi cil qui bien counissoient Merlin, et qui Uterpandragon avoient servi et li dient: 'Sire, honerés molt Merlin, car ce fu li bons devins a vostre pere, et qui vostre lignages a tous jors molt amés, et a Vertigier[2] dist se mort, et qui la table ronde fist faire. Or gardés qu'il soit molt onerés, car vous ne li demanderés ja cose que il ne vous die.' Et Artus respondi, si fera il. Lors prist li rois Merlin et l'asist dejoste lui, et fist molt grant joie de sa venue Et Merlins li dist: 'Sire, je parleroie volentiers a vous a consel priveement, et si eust aveuc vos . ij . de vos barons en qui plus vous vous fiés.'

Et li rois dist: 'Merlin, je ferai quanque vous me loerés por bien.' Et Merlins respondi: 'Je ne vous loerai ja cose que contre la volenté a Nostre Segnor soit.' Lor apela li rois Keu le senescal qu'il avoit longement tenu por son frere, et mon segnor Gavain le fil le roi Lot d'Orchanie qui estoit ses niés, et furent tot . iiij . a un consel, et lors li dist Merlins: 'Artu, vous estes roi, la Diu merci, et Uter[3] vostre pere si fu molt preudom, et fu faite la table

[1] Not named.
[2] Uter pendragon.
[3] Uter pendragon.

(45 *b*) reonde a son tans, qui fu faite en senefiance de celi u Notre Sire sist au juesdi, quant il dist que Judas le trairoit, et si fu faite encontre la table Joseph, que estorée fu de par le Graal, quant il departi les buens des mauvais. Si vuel que vous saciés qu'il a eü . ij . rois en Bretagne qui ont esté roi de France et empereor de Rome, et je vuel bien que vous saciés que en Bretagne sera encor li tiers rois, qui rois et emperere en sera, et le conquerra a force sor les Romains, et je vous di, si com jou ai le pooir de savoir les coses qui sont a venir, que je les tieng de Nostre Segnor, que . cc .[1] ans devant çou que vous fussiés nés si vous fu ele prophetisie et jetés le sors sor vous. Mais il vous couvient ançois que vous soiés si preus et si vaillans que li table reonde soit resaucie par vous. Et bien vous fac seür que vous ja emperere n'en serés, desci adont que li table reonde ert si essaucie que je vous dirai.'

'Il avint jadis que li Graaus si fu bailliés a Joseph, quant il fu mis en la prison que Nostre Sire meisme li aporta, et cil Joseph, quant il fu mis hors de le prison, si s'en entra en un desert, et une grant partie de le gent de Judée avuec lui, et tant com il se tinrent en bien si orent la grasse de Nostre Segnor, et quant il fu autrement si lor defali. Et il demanderent Joseph se çou estoit par lor pecié u par le sien que li grasse lor estoit faillie? Et quant Joseph l'oi si en fu dolans, et s'en ala devant son vaissel, et pria a Nostre Segnor qu'il li fesist demostrance comment ce pooit estre. Et lors s'aparut (45 *c*) la vois del Saint Esperit et li dist qu'il estorast une table, et il si fist, et quant il l'ot faite, si assist son vaissel desus, et

[1] · c · anz ainz que vus fussiez rois prophetizerent li prophete votre venue, et sachiez que la reine Sibile prophetiza et dit que vus seriez le tierz hons qui rois en seroit, et apres le dit Salemon, et je le tierz, qui le vus di, et puis que li sorz en est getez, etc.

les rova asseir. Lors s'asisent cil qui del pecié estoient cuite, et cil que le pecié avoient fait s'en alerent, qui n'i porent demorer. A cele table si ot un liu vuit, por çou qu'il sambla Joseph que nus hom ne devoit seir el liu[1] u Nostre Sires avoit sis, et uns faus deciples, qui avoit non Moys, qui molt sovent les essaia et tempta en plusors manieres, si s'en vint a Joseph et li pria por Diu que cel liu qui la estoit vuis li laissast aemplir, car il dist qu'il sentoit tant de la grasse Nostre Segnor que bien estoit dignes del seir el liu vuit. Et Joseph li dist: 'Moys, si vous n'estes teus com vous faites le semblant je vous lo
d. que vous ne vous en metés ja en essai'; et cil deciples li respondi que ausi li dounast Dius la victoire del liu aemplir com il estoit buens. Et lors li dist Joseph, se il estoit si buens si s'i alast asseoir, et Moys s'asist et fondi en abysme.[2] Or si saciés que Nostre Sire fist la premiere table, et Joseph fist la seconde, et jou, au tans Uterpandragon vostre pere, fis faire le tierce, que mult sera encore essaucie, et parlera par tout le monde de le buene cevalerie que a vostre tans sera. Or si sacés[3] que li Graaus fu bailliés a Joseph, et après son fin le laissa a son serorge, qui avoit non Bron; et cil Bron si a . xii . fils, si en est li uns només Alains li Gros, et li commanda li Rois Peschiere la garde de ses freres. Cil Alains est venus en ceste terre de Judée, si comme Nostre Sire l'a commandé, en ces illes vers occidant (45 *d*) et sont arrivé en cest pais, et li Rois Peschiere si converse en ces illes d'Irlande en

[1] dont iudas s'osta.

[2] dont il ne sordra iusqu'a au tens a l'Entecrist.

[3] or sachez que li Graaus qui fust bailliez a Joseph est en ce pais et en la guarde au riche roi pecheor a qui Joseph le bailla par le comendement Notre Seygnor quant il dut fenir, et cil rois pescheors est en grant enfermetez, etc.

. j . des plus biaus lius del monde, et sacés qu'il est a la gregnor mesaise que onques fust hom, et est cheüs en grant maladie. Mais tant vous puis je bien dire que, por viellece que il ait, ne por enfermeté, ne puet morir desci adont que uns chevaliers que sera a la table reonde ait tant fait d'armes et de cevalerie en tornois, et par querre aventures, qu'il sera li plus alosés del monde; et cil, quant il sera si essaucie qu'il pora venir a la cort le rice Roi Pescheor, et qu'il aura demandé de quoi li Graaus a servi et de quoi il sert, et tant tost sera garis. Et lors li acontera les secrées paroles de Nostre Segneur, si trespassera de vie a mort, et cil chevaliers ara le sang Jesus Christ en garde et lors charront li encantement par le terre de Bretagne, et adont si sera la prophesie toute paracomplie.

'Or si saces, se tu le fais ensi com je t'ai ensagnié, que grans buens t'en pora venir. Et il m'en covenra aler, que je ne poroie [1] plus estre au siecle, car saciés que je n'en ai pas le congié de mon Sauveor.' Et li rois dist que se il pooit ne voloit avuec lui demourer, qu'il l'ameroit molt durement, et Merlin lui dist que ce ne poroit avenir qu'il demorast. Atant departi Merlins del roi, si s'en ala en Nortumbellande [2] a Blayse qui ot esté confessere se mere et qui avoit mises toutes ses oeuvres en escrit, çou que Merlins l'en avoit dit.[3] Et Artus remest avuec ses barons et pensa mult a çou que Merlins li avoit conté, et saciés bien que onques rois ausi grant cort ne ausi grant feste (46 *a*) ne fist comme fist Artus, ne onques ne fu rois qui tant se fesist amer a ses barons com il fist, et il meismes estoit li plus biaus hom et li mieldres chevaliers

D. 95 a

[1] quar ie ne puis mie sovent demostrer au peuple.
[2] Ortoberlande.
[3] et par son escrit le savon nos encore.

qu'on seüst, et por çou qu'il estoit si vaillans rois, et[1] por les biaus dons qu'il dounoist, si estoit il si renommés qu'on ne parloit par tot le monde se de lui non, si que
b. toute li chevalerie repairoit a se cort por lui veïr et por son acointement, ne on ne prisoit chevalerie que nus hom faisoit se il n'eüst ançois esté .j. an de la maisnie Artu et il n'eust u mance u pegnon de ses armes, si que par tout le mont en parla on,[2] et en vinrent les noveles la u Alains li Gros conversoit, et pensa en son cuer qu'il i envoieroit Perceval son fil quant il seroit tens qu'il poroit ses armes baillier; et li dist maintes fois: 'Biaus fis, quant vous serés grans je vos menrai mult ricement a le cort le roi Artu.' Ceste parole li dist maintes fois tant qu'a Nostre Segnor plot qu'Alains li Gros trespassa de cest siecle, et quant il fu mors si se pensa Percevaus qu'il iroit a le cort Artu.

.I. jor si prist unes armes, si s'arma mult ricement et monta en un chaceor et s'en ala si coiement que onques se mere ne le sot. Quant se mere oi la novele que Percevaus en estoit alés si en demena mult grant duel, et pensa en son cuer que li sauvecine de le forest le mangeroient, et tant en ot grant duel qu'ele en morut de le pensée. Et Percevaus cevauça tant qu'il vint a le cort le rice roi Artu, et vint devant lui et le salua molt hautement voiant les barons, et dist que se lui plaisoit qu'il demourroit a lui molt volentiers, et seroit de se (46 *b*)

[1] e por son bele acointement, et por son biaux paller.

[2] D. gives a long passage in which voice of Holy Spirit warns A. he is near his end; that his father is in this land and may not die till A.'s son has found him, received the Grail, and learnt the secret words. (D. 95 c). The whole of the section relating P.'s departure for court differs greatly, D. makes no mention of the mother's death, the two fall into line again at account of arrival of other knights at court,

maisnie. Et li rois le retint, et le fist chevalier, et illuec aprist molt de sens et de cortesie, car saciés que quant il issi de ciés sa mere qu'il ne savoit riens; et si bien se prova o les autres barons qu'il fu puis de le table reonde, et fu molt amés a le cort des barons. Après çou i vint Saigremore, et Yvains le fius au roi Urien, et uns autres[1] Yvains as blances mains, et Dodiniaus li fius a le dame de Malehaut, et Mordrés le niés Artu, qui puis fist le grant *D. 95 d.* mesprison si com vous porrés oir, et Guirrés ses frere, et Garriés, et Gawains, et cil . iiij . estoient fil li roi Lot d'Orchanie, et li rois Artus estoit lor oncles. Après i vint Lanselos del Lac, qui molt estoit de haut afaire, et tant i vinrent d'autres chevaliers que je nes puis retraire, mais tant vous puis je bien dire qu'il i ot tant de buens chevaliers a le cort le rice roi Artu qu'on ne parloit par tout le mont se de le buene cevalerie non de le table reonde que li rices rois Artus tenoit; tant que Artus se pensa de çou que Merlins li avoit dit; si s'en vint a ses barons et ses cevaliers, si lor dist: 'Segnor, saciés qu'il vous covenra tous revenir a le Pentecoste, car jou i volrai le gregnor feste tenir a icel jor qu'onques nus rois tenist en nule terre. Et si vuel que cascuns de vous amaint se feme avuec lui, car je volrai molt onerer le table reonde que Merlins estora au tans Uterpandragon mon pere, et si i volrai asseoir as . xij . lius les . xij . pers de ma cort. Si saciés que tot cil qui a ma feste seront, et avuec moi volront demourer, seront a tous jors de le table (46 *c*) reonde et aront si grant francise par tout la u il venront que cascuns ara pegnon u counissance de le table reonde.'

A ceste parole ot molt grant bruit, et molt furent lié *D. 96 a.*

[1] D. does not mention Y. '*as blances mains*,' also distinguishes Dodiniaus from '*le fiz a la fille a la tenuve* (*sic*) *de Male hot*'—Generez, Gacies,

tout li baron de le cort qui molt desiroient qu'ils fussent renomé de le table reonde. Atant s'en partirent et ala cascuns en son pais, et Artus demoura a Logres qui molt fu en grant pensée, comment il peust le table reonde essaucier.

A le [1] Pentecouste avint que tout li cevalier de par toutes les terres s'assamblérent por venir a le feste que li rois Artus tenoit, et bien saciés que li rois Artus estoit de si grant pris que cil meisme qui de lui ne tenoient riens cuidassent estre honis, et n'osassent jamais venir a le buene cort, ne en liu u preudom les veist, se il ne venissent a le cort le rice roi Artu as Pentecostes. Lors en i vint tant de par toutes terres que nus hom ne les puist retraire, tant que le jor de le Pentecoste avint que Artus s'en vint a le table reonde, et i fist la messe canter voiant tout le peule qui la estoit. Et quant la messe fu cantée si prist li rois les . xij . pers, et les fist asseoir es . xij . lius, et li tresimes remest vius, por le senefiance del liu u Judas sist quant il se leva, et a le table Uterpandragon le laissa Merlins vuit, et por çou ne l'osa faire li rois aemplir.

b. MOLT fu grans li feste que li rois tint le jor de le Pentecoste. Car cil de le table reonde li vestirent dras roiaus et si li misent le corone el cief, et fu li rois si honerés com il devoit estre. Car en plus de . vij . c.[2] (46 *d*) encensiers de fin or l'encensoit on par tot la u il aloit, et li jetoient le glaiol et le mente devant lui, et li faisoient tant d'onnor com il plus porent. Lors commanda li rois que tout cil qui estoient a sa feste venu fussent tout revesti d'unes reubes, et d'unes counissances ; et bien saciés que si tost com il ot commandé si fu il fait, et tant i ot de cevaliers et de demisiaus que li rois en dona a . v .[3] mil et . cccc . reubes et recounissances de le table reonde.

[1] All this passage is confused and compressed in D. [2] . c . [3] . vi .

Atant fist li rois l'aigue corner a . c . buisines, et s'asisent tout li chevaliers a mangier, et saciés que Artus servi, le corone el cief, en une reube d'or, et fu molt regardé de çaus qui ainc mais ne l'avoient veu, et fu a mervelles le jor prisiés de tous çaus qui le virent. Après mangier fist li rois les tables oster, et s'en issirent as cans por behorder. Qui *D. 96 c.* dont veist dames et demiseles[1] monter en ces tors et apoier a ces creniaus de ces murs, por veir le behort des chevaliers, et por veir le feste qu'on faisoit! Car saciés bien que le jor i josterent cil de le table reonde a çaus qui defors estoient venus, et molt furent regardé de dames et de demiseles, et por çou se penoient molt plus, car il n'i avoit gaires chevalier qui n'i eust u se seror, u se feme, u s'amie ; et saciés bien que le jor emporterent le pris d'armes cil de le table reonde, car Mesire Gavains, li fius li roi Lot i josta molt ruistement, et Kex li senescaus qui estoit fius Entor, et Urgains[2] uns hardis chevalier, et Saigremors, et Lanselos del Lac, et Eres[3] qui molt estoit cevalerous. Tant i josterent bien qu'il forjosterent çaus defors, et au vespre en orent le pris (47*a*), et li rois Artus, qui molt fu vaillans, sist le jor sor . j . palefroy, et tenoit . j . baston en se main, et aloit entre les rens por tenir pais que nus ne s'i mellast. Et avuec lui fu Percevaus, li[4] fils Alains li Gros, qui molt fu dolans de çou qu'il n'i avoit josté, mais il estoit navré en se main si n'i josta mie, et ala toute jor avuec Artu, et Guirrés et Gariés qui frere estoient a mon segnor Gavain, et fil le roi Lot. Et cil . iij . furent toute jor avuec le roi, et *D. 96 d.* alerent veoir les dames et les demiseles, et regardirent les jostes qu'on fist le jor. Et la fille[5] au roi Lot d'Orchanie,

[1] aler e venir a la table ronde, e monter, etc.

[2] Hurgains, (no qualification) et Bedvers. [3] Guinereth. [4] le Galois.

[5] Aleine—estoit niece G. et fille le roi Mantre (Nentre?) de Galerot. et sa mere fust seur li roi Artus.

la suer mon segnor Gavain, qui avoit non Elaine, et estoit la plus bele demisele qui fust a son tans, et vit Perceval le Galois, et l'en ama molt durement en son cuer, et qu'en pot ele? car il estoit li plus biaus chevalier de toute la maisnie Artu le roy. Au vespre si se departi li tornois, et commencierent a caroler li chevaliers et les demiseles, et a faire molt grant feste. Mais Elainne li suer monsegnor Gavains pensa molt a Perceval le Galois, qu'ele amoit molt durement, et quant ce vint a la nuit li cevalier alerent a lors osteus et a lor trés, mais Elainne ne s'aseüra mie, ains apela . j . vallet, si l'envoia a Perceval le Galois, et li manda que Elainne, le suer monsegnor Gavain, le saluoit molt hautement, et qu'ele desiroit molt qu'ele le veist joster a la table reonde, et li manda que par la foi qu'il li devoit qu'il jostast au matin devant li, et fust armés d'unes armes ver-
a. melles qu'ele li envoieroit. Et quant Percevaus l'oi si s'en mervella molt, et en ot molt grant joie en son cuer de çou que si vaillans demisele que le fille le roi Lot li avoit mandé que por s'amor s'armast, et alast joster a le (47 *b*) table reonde. Lors dist au mesage que il n'est riens que li demisele li mandast qu'il ne fesist por s'amor, 'et jou i josterai molt volentiers.'

Quant li mesages l'eut oi, si en fu molt liés, et revint a se demisele, et li conta tout çou que Percevaus li avoit respondu, et li demisele, qui molt en fu lie, prist les armes, si les envoia a Perceval qui molt durement en fu liés; et saciés qu'il dormi molt petit le nuit. Au matin se leva li rois, et ala le messe oir, et li baron avuec lui, et quant li messe fu dite si s'en alerent li . xij . per a le table reonde mangier, et i furent bien servi, et Artus les ouneroit molt a son pooir, et fist l'aigue corner, et sisent li cevalier au mangier par le sale, et furent bien servi, mais de lor mès ne de çou qu'ils mangierent, ne parole pas li contes, mais

tant vous puis je bien dire qu'il orent quanqu'il volrent deviser. Après mangier fist li rois les tables oster, et issirent as cans les dames et les demiseles por veir le behordie, et le feste de le table reonde.

Elainne, li suer monsegnor Gavain, i fu venue, qui molt *D. 97 b.* desiroit a mervelles qu'ele veïst Perceval armé des armes qu'ele li envoia. Lors issirent li cevalier de Carduel qui joster voloient et avoir le pris, et vinrent a le table reonde, et commencierent a behorder, et lors recommença la feste que onques mais n'avoit esté si grans. Et bien saciés que Lanselos del Lac forjostoit tous çaus de fors, et Gavains et mesire Yvains li fius au roi Urien. Lors i vint Perceval (47 *c*) li Galois, si s'estoit bien armés des armes que li demisele li avoit envoiiées, et ala ferir de plain eslais en l'escu Saigremor, et quant Saigremors le vit si s'en issi contre lui, et laissierent les cevaus aler de tant com il porent corre, et se donnerent si grans cols es escus que les lances peçoierent, et Percevaus li Galois, qui molt sot de teus afaires, le hurta si durement de cors et de ceval que Saigremors fu si estounés qu'il ne sot qu'il devint, et vola en mi le pré si durement que tout cil qui le virent cuiderent qu'il fu mors, et Percevaus prist le ceval, si le presenta a *D. 97 c.* Elainne qui molt grant joie en demena, et bien saciés que Percevaus fist le jor tant d'armes qu'il forjosta tous çaus de le table reonde, et abati Keu [1] le senescal, et Yvain li fil Urien, et Lanselot del Lac,[2] et disent que bien devoit le liu de le table reonde aemplir. Et li rois, qui molt fu vaillans et sage, s'en vint a Perceval, et si li dist: 'Sire cevaliers des or vuel jou que vous soiés de ma maisnie, et de le table reonde, et que vous demorés a moi, et saciés

[1] Quei, Evein.

[2] si que tuit cil qui le virent distrent qu'il estoit le mieudres chevaliers del monde et bien, etc.

que je vous volrai molt onerer d'or en avant.' Et Percevaus li dist: 'Sire, la vostre merci.' Lors osta Percevaus son hiaume et li rois l'a coneü, si li vint a grant mervelle, et li demanda por quoi çou estoit qu'il ne s'estoit tres ier armés, et por quoi il s'estoit desconeüs, et Percevaus li dist: 'Sire, ce vous aiderai je bien a celer, mais tant vous puis je bien dire que por amors ai fait çou que jou en ai fait, et saciés que se jo m'en peüsse destorner qu'encore i fusse jou a venir.' Et quant li rois l'a oi et entendu (47 *d*), si commença a rire, et li pardouna molt buenement, et li dist que çou que l'on faisoit par amor devoit on legierement pardouner, et ausi fist mesire Gavains
d. et Yvains et Lanselos, et tout cil de le table reonde. Et lors dist Percevaus au roi qu'il voloit aler veir le table reonde et çaus qui i seoient, et li rois li dist: 'Biaus amis, demain le poés veoir,' et Percevaus li dist: 'Sire, je les i verroie molt volentiers seoir.' A tant le laissa, et firent grant feste le nuit, et lendemain s'asamblerent li baron et oirent le messe, et quant li messe fu dite si s'en vinrent tout el liu la u le table reonde seoit, et li rois les fist aseoir et quant il furent assis si remest li lius vius, et Percevaus demanda le roi que cil lius vius senefia, et li rois li dist: 'Biaus amis, il senefie grant cose, car il i doit seoir li mieldres cevaliers del monde!' Et Percevaus pensa en son cuer qu'il s'i asseroit, et li dist le roi: 'Sire, donés moi le don que je m'i assiece.' Et li rois respondi qu'il ne s'i asseroit mie, car il l'en poroit bien meschair, car el liu vuit s'assist ja uns faus deciples, que maintenant qu'il fu assis fu fondus en terre, 'et se je vous en donoie le don si ne vous i devés vous mie asseir.' Et quant Percevaus l'oï si s'en coreça, et dist: 'Sire rois, si m'ait Dex, se vous ne m'en donés le congié je vous di bien que je ne serai plus de vostre maisnie!' Quant Gavains a çou oi si en fu molt

dolans, car il amoit molt Perceval, et li dist: 'Sire, donnés l'ent le congié.' Et lors en pria Lanselos[1] le roi, et tout li . xij . per, et tant en proierent le roi que a grans painnes qu'il li otroia, et li dist: 'Je vos en doing le don.' Quant (48 *a*) Percevaus l'a oi si en fu molt liés, et passa avant, et se segna del Saint Esperit, et s'asist el liu, et tant tost com il fu assis li piére fendi desous lui et braist si angoisseusement qu'il sambla a tous çaus qui la estoient que li siecles fondist en abisme, et del brait que li terre jeta si issi une[2] *D* si grans tenebrors qu'il ne porent entrevoir en plus d'une liuee. Après cou si vint une vois qui lors dist:

'Rois Artus, tu as faite la plus grande mesprison que onques rois qui en Bretagne fust fesist. Car tu as trespassé le commandement que Merlins t'avoit ensagnié, et bien saces que cil Percevaus a fait le plus grant hardement que onques mais nus hom fesist, et dont il charra en la forçor painne del monde, et il, et tout cil de le table reonde, et bien saces que, se ne fust por la bonté Alains le Gros son pere, et por la bonté Bron[3] son taion, qui est clamés li Rois Peschiere, qu'il fust fondu en abisme, et morust de la dolerouse mort dont Moys morut, quant il s'asist fausement el liu que Joseph li avoit desfendu. Et saces, rois Artus, que Nostre Sire vous fait savoir que icil vaissiaus que Nostre Sire donna a Joseph en le prison, saces qu'il est en cest pais, et est apelés Graaus. Icil Rois Peschiere si est cheüs en grant maladie, et est cheus en grant enfermeté, et bien saces que cil rois n'ara ja mais garison ne ne sera la piere rasoldée del liu de le table reonde u Percevaus s'asist, dusque dont qu'uns cevaliers ait tant fait d'armes, et de bontés, et de proueces, de çaus[4] meismes qui sont assis a cele table, et quant cil chevaliers sera si *D.*

[1] et Bedvers.
[2] une fumee et.
[3] not named.
[4] · xxx · added.

essauciés sor tos homes, et ara le pris de le chevalerie del siecle, quant il ara (48 *b*) tant fait, si l'asenera Dex a la maison le rice Roi Pescheor. Et lors, quant il aura demandé quoi on en fait, et cui on en sert, de cel Graal, lors, quant il aura çou demandé, si sera li Rois Peschiere garis, et sera la piere rasoldée del liu de le table reonde et charront li encantement que hui cest jor sont en le terre de Bretagne.' Quant li rois l'a oi et cil qui a la table reonde seoient, si s'en mervellierent molt, et disent bien tout que jamais n'aresteront desci adont qu'il aront trovée le maison au rice Roi Pescheor, et si demanderont de quoi li Graaus sert. Et Percevaus li Galois jura bien que jamais ne gira une nuit la u il gira autre dusqu' adont qu'il l'ara trovée, et autretel dist mesire Gavains, et [1] Eres, et Saigremors, et tot cil qui a la table reonde seoient. Quant Artus l'entendi [2] si en fu molt dolans, et toutes voies lor en douna le don.

Atant departi Artus sa cort, et ralerent li plusor en lor pais, et li plusor remesent a lor osteus, et avuec li roi. Et Percevaus et cil de le table reonde s'atornerent com por aler, et s'armerent a lor osteus, et, quant il furent atiré, si vinrent tot monté devant le roi, voiant les barons de le cort, et lors dist mesire Gavains, voiant les barons de le cort: 'Segneur, il nos en covenra aler, si com la vois de Nostre Segnor nos a ensagnié, mais nous ne savons u, ne de quel part, desci adont que Nostre Sire nous i fera adrecier.' Quant li rois et li baron l'oirent, si commencierent a plorer, car il n'en cuident jamais . j . reveoir. Atant s'en departirent li baron (48 *c*) del roi, et cevaucierent toute jor ensamble qu'onques aventure ne troverent, et

[1] adds Bedvers, et Hurgains.

[2] si en ot grant joie que la prophetie que Merlin li ot dite sera achevee.

l'endemain desci a none, et tant cevaucierent qu'il troverent une crois. Lors s'aresterent iluec, et aorerent le crois et proierent Diu merci. Et lors dist Percevaus [1] a ses compagnons: 'Segneur, se nous cevauçons ensamble, nous n'i ferons mie grant conquest, mais je vos proi que nous *D. 98 d.* nous departons, et voist cascuns sa voie par lui' Et Gavains respondi: 'Se nous le faisiemes ensi, nostre besogne sera mauvaisement furnie, mais faisons le ensi com Perceval nous a consellié.' Et il respondent tout: 'Nous l'otroions ensi.'

Atant se departirent, et ala cascuns la voie que miels li sist et entrerent en la queste del Graal, mais des aventures qu'il troverent, ne des painnes qu'il orent, ne vous puis je pas faire conte fors tant qu'au livre en monte, ne de Gavains ne de ses compagnons.

Quar saciés que quant Percevaus se departi de ses compagnons, qu'il cevauça tout le jor, qu'onques aventure ne trova, ne ne pot trover ostel u il se peüst herbergier; si le covint le nuit gesir en la forest, si osta le frain de son ceval, si laissa paistre l'erbe, ne onques Percevaus le nuit ne dormi, ains gaita toute nuit son ceval por la sauveçine de le forest. Et lendemain quant l'aube fu crevée si rensela son ceval et mist le frain, et monta sans atargier, et *D. 99 a.* cevauça parmi le forest toute jor desci a prime. Ensi com il cevauçoit si regarda joste lui a senestre, et vit un cevalier qui estoit ferus d'une lance parmi le cors et si que la lance i estoit encore, et si avoit une espée embroiie (*48 d*) parmi son hiaume desci es dens, et dejoste lui si avoit . j . ceval [2] atacié et . j . escu, et joste le cors avoit le plus bele demisele qu'onques fesist nature, et menoit

[1] Gauvain. (This is probably correct judging from parallel passages in other romances.)

[2] · j · mul, etc.

là forçor doleur qu'onques mais feme demenast, et plagnoit et regretoit le cevalier qu'illuec estoit, et feroit l'un puing en l'autre et esraçoit les caviaus, et esgratinoit son viaire si angoisseusement qu'il n'est nus hom qui le veïst qui n'en eüst grant pitié. Et quant Percevaus le vit si en ot molt grant pitié, si point le ceval des esporons et point cele part, et quant li demisele le vit sie laissa auques son duel ester et se dreça encontre lui, et li dist: 'Sire, bien puissiés vous venir.' Et Percevaus li dist: 'Demisele, Dex vous otroit forçor joie que vous n'aiés.' Et ele li a respondu: 'Sire, je [ne] poroie jamais avoir joie, qu'on m'a devant moi celui ocis que je tant amoie, et que tant m'avoit honorée, qu'il n'estoit riens qu'il tant amast com il faisoit le cors de moi.' Et[1] quant Percevaus l'oi si li demanda: 'Demisele, tres quant estiés vous en sa compagnie?' Et ele respont: 'Biaus Sire, je le vous dirai.

Il avint cose que je estoie a le maison mon pere en ceste forest, et uns gaians manoit a se maison a demie jornée pres. Si m'avoit demandée a mon pere grant tans avoit, mais mes pere l'en avoit escondit et si en a mon pere lonc tans guerroié, et tant que li gaians sot que mes pere estoit alés a le maison le rice roi Artu, qu'il devoit tenir a la Pentecoste le table reonde a Carduel. Quant il sot que mes pere estoit alés a le cort le roi Artu si s'en vint a no manoir, et esraça la porte et vint en la sale qu'il ne trova qui le contredist. Et tant qu'il (49 *a*) vint en le cambre me mere, et me ravi et emporta avuec lui, et me fist monter sor son ceval que vous poés illuec veoir, et m'amena ici, et me fist descendre, et volt avueques moi gesir; et je qui molt le redoutai plorai et criai hautement,

[1] P. asks name of knight, is told it is Hurganet; he was of Arthur's household, and was in quest of Grail. P. nearly falls from his steed for grief, then asks question as in M.

et cil chevaliers que vous veés ci entendi la vois, et vint ferant des esporons desci que sor nous, si que li gaians ne s'en dona onques garde, desci qu'il le vit dejoste lui ; si en ot molt grant duel, et li corut sus de plain eslais, et li cevaliers, qui molt fu preus et vaillans, le reçut molt vivement au pooir qu'il ot, mais tant vous puis je bien dire que li gaians le reçut molt mauvaisement, et le greva molt, mais le chevaliers le hasta de l'espée, et li colpa le teste, et le pendi la aval a le brance d'un arbre, et lors vint a moi, et me fist monter, et dist qu'il feroit de moi s'amie, et je, qui molt en oi grant leece, si li otroia[i] volentiers, et li dis qu'a tos jors mais le retenroie a segnor et a ami puis qu'il m'avoit delivrée de l'anemi qui m'eüst honie et morte. Et cevauçames ier toute jor ensamble, et hui matin desci a tierce, et tant que nous trovames[1] . j . pavellon tendu ; si *D.* alames cele part por veir la feste qu'on i faisoit, car ainc si grant feste ne fu veue comme cil demenoient qui estoient el tref. Et quant nos entrames dedens le pavellon dont li pan estoient haucié, et quant nos fumes entrés dedens le pavellon, tout autresi com il avoient fait joie si demenerent après grant dolor, quant il nous virent venir. Et quant mes amis vit qu'il demenoient si grant dolor si s'en esmervella molt. Et lors vint une demisele qui dist que nos vuidissiemes tost le tré et tornast on en fuies car se on plus (49 *b*) i demouroit il sera ja ocis. Et il respondi com cil qui rien ne savoit de lor affaire qu'il ne s'en isteroit rien encore. Et lor pria : 'Demiseles por Diu laissiés ester la dolor, et faites la joie que vous solıés faire.' Et eles respondirent : 'Biaus Sire, comment feriemes nous feste quant il vos covenra ja morir devant nous? Car li[2] Orguelleus de le Lande, qui ci a tendu son pavellon, vous ocira, et bien saciés que ja n'en avera merci.

[1] a demie lieue galesche. [2] li Orgoillos Delandes.

mais se vos m'en creés vous irés ançois que pis vous en
a. venist. Et il respondi: 'Douces demiseles, je ne dout pas qu'un chevaliers me puisse bien damagier.' Et quant eles l'oirent si commencierent a plorer. Atant vint uns nains cevauçant sor un roncin, une corgie en se main, qui molt estoit fel et cruels, ne onques ne nous salua autrement qu'il nous dist que mal fussiemes nous venus, Et nous si fumes au samblant qu'il nous mostra, car il me feri molt angoisseusement de sa corgie parmi mon viaire, si que les treces i parurent; et prist l'estace del tref, et l'abati sor nous, et saciés qu'a mon ami en anoia molt, mais il ne se dagna meller au nain. Et si tost comme li nains ot ce fait, si s'en torna et feri son roncin de se corgie, et nous nous en tornames atant et alames nos chemin, car nous n'i aviemes que faire plus, et n'eüsmes
b. pas[1] alé demi liue quant nous veismes a cevauçant .j. cevalier molt bien armés d'unes vermelles armes, et venoit de si grant aleüre qu'il faisoit tout le bois croissir, et sambloit qu'il en i eüst dis, si demena il grant tempeste. Et quant li cevaliers nos aproça si s'escria a haute vois: 'Par Diu, dans chevaliers, mar (49 *c*) i avés mon tref abatu, ne la joie que i estoit faite entrelaissier.' Et quant mes amis l'ot entendu si s'en retorna par devers lui, et retornerent les ciés de lor cevaus, et li cevaliers, qui estoit molt fors, feri mon ami parmi le cors, et après traist l'espée et le feri parmi li hiaume si comme vous poés veoir. Et quant il l'ot ocis si s'entorna, qu'onques moi ni mon[2] ceval ne dagna regarder;

[1] et n'eumes pas longuement alez que nos oimes le bois croissir darrieres nos, et oimes venir si grant tempeste que ce samblot un grant torment et je en fui tote esfrée et espoentée, et quand nos nos reguardames si veimes—then agrees with text of M., thus repeating description of knight's coming.

[2] ne le chevalier.

et je remés toute seule en ceste forest, et se jou ai grant duel nus ne m'en doit blasmer, quant jou ai celui perdu qui m'avoit delivrée de l'anemi. Or vous ai dit le voir de çou *D.* que vous m'avés demandé.' Et quant cele ot çou dit si commença a plorer et a faire grant duel. Et Percevaus qui molt fu dolans de la dolor qu'il li vit avoir, parla a li et li dist, 'Demisele, en ceste duel ne povrés vous rien recovrer, mais montés sor cel mul et me menés au tref le cevaliers, car jamais n'arai joie desci adont que je l'arai vengié.' Et li demisele li respondi: 'Sire, se vous m'en creés, vous n'irés pas, car li cevaliers est trop fors et trop grans, et se il en venoit au desus il vous ociroit, et por çou nel di je pas que ce ne soit li hom el monde que je plus hae.' Et Percevaus li dist qu'il n'arestera dusqu'a dont qu'il ara veü le cevalier.

Atant fist Percevaus la damoisele monter, et tinrent lor voie ensamble desci au pavellon, et oirent la joie que les damoiselles demenoient. Et si tost com eles coisirent Percevaus si laissiérent lor joie ester,[1] et li hucierent a haute *D.* vois qu'il s'en alast (49 *d*) car se lor sire venoit il le covenroit a morir. Et Percevaus, qui molt petit prisa çou qu'eles disoient, s'en vint cevauçant desci el pavellon. Si com il estoit ens entrés et parloit a eles si vint le nains sor .j. roncin, qui molt estoit lais et hisdeus, et tint une corgie en se main, et en feri le ronci[2] en le teste, et puis li dist: 'Fuiés tost del pavellon a mon segnor!' Et puis vint a le demisele, si l'en feri parmi le col et parmi les mains, et prist le palefroi a le demisele, et le volt faire reculer fors del pavellon. Et quant Percevaus le vit si en fu molt dolans, et prist se lance parmi le fer, et l'en douna .j.

[1] et commencierent a faire le greygnor duel del monde, et a plorer, et li, etc.

[2] si en feri Perceval par mi le heaume (probably correct).

grant colp parmi les espaules qu'il le fist voler jus del ronci
a. a le terre tot plat,[1] mais il sali sus, et vint a son ronci, et i monta, et dist a Perceval: 'Par Diu, dans chevaliers,[2] ja ançois ne sera li jors passés que grant honte vous sera creüe.' Et Percevaus remest el pavellon, qui molt fu dolans de le demisele que li nains avoit si laidoiie.

Ensi com il estoient illuec, si virent venir le chevalier tot armé de vermelles armes, et li nain avuec lui, et quant li demisele le vit si ot paor, et li escria: 'Biaus Sire, veés la celui qui m'ocist mon ami!' Et quant Percevaus l'entendi si li retorna le cief de son ceval, et issi del pavellon, et quant li cevalier le vit si li escria: 'Par Diu, dans chevaliers, mar i avés mon nain batu.'[3] Et Percevaus, qui petit prisa son dit et son beubant, li torna le cief de son ceval, et s'entrevinrent de molt grant aleüre com cil qui nient s'entreamoient. Et li cevaliers qui molt ot force et hardement fiert Perceval en l'escu (50 *a*), si qu'il li fist fraindre et percier, et li fist le fer passer par selonc le senestre aissele, et bien saciés que s'il l'eust pris en car qu'il l'eust ocis. Et Percevaus qui molt estoit cevalerous li rapoia sa lance en l'escu par si grant mautalent qu'ainc haubers ne escus ne cose[4] qu'il eust vestue ne li fu garans qu'il ne li fesist le fer sentir en le car. Et s'entrehurterent si angoisseusement des cors et des ciés et des escus qu'il furent si estounés qu'il ne sorent qu'il devinrent, si que resnes et enarmes[5] lor volérent des puins, et porta li uns l'autre si durement a terre que vous fussiés ançois une liue alé que vous seussiés qu'il fussent devenu. Mais au plus

[1] que poi qu'il ne l'ocist tot mort.

[2] mult vos sera chier vendue ceste colee que vos m'avez donee.

[3] et antré en mon tref a force; si ne vos en faiz repentir bien porra dire le nains que a mauvès seygnor a servi.

[4] ne auquetons ne quirée.

[5] perdirent le rênes et narines.

tost qu'il porent salirent sus, et prisent les escus as enarmes, et sacierent lor espées, et passa li uns vers l'autre. Et li chevaliers, qui molt ot force et pooir, tint l'espée nue et l'escu enbracié, et requist Perceval par molt grant air. Et Percevaus mist l'escu avant, et li chevaliers i feri molt ruistement si que il le colpa dusqu'en le bocle, et vint li cols avalant par molt grant vertu, si qu'il li fist voler a terre flors et pierres, et l'eust damagié, mais li *D.* espée li torna el puing, et escaucira en defors. Quant Percevaus le vit, si li crut force et hardemens, et s'en vint vers lui, car il le cuida ferir parmi le hiaume. Mais li cevaliers li tent l'escu encontre, et Percevaus i feri, qui molt avoit ire et mautalent, qu'il li fist fendre desci es puins, et le navra molt malement en le senestre espaule, et le hurta si que por un poi qu'il ne chai a le terre. Lors li recorut sus molt ruistement (50 *b*), et li chevaliers se desfendi au miels qu'il pot comme cil qui cuidoit que nus hom ne peüst contre lui. Mais Percevaus le hasta si qu'il li covint a defuir parmi le pré, ne onques ne pot faire nes *D.* un recouvrement, et tant le hasta Percevaus qu'il li osta le hiaume hors de le teste, et li eust le teste colpée, quant il cria por Diu merci qu'il ne l'ocesist, et qu'il se metroit en sa prison en tous les lius u il sauroit deviser.[1] Quant Percevaus entent que cil merci requeroit, si ne le dagna plus roncier, ains se traist arriere, et li dist qu'il li juerroit sor sains qu'il et ses damoiseles se metroient en le prison le roi Artu, et par teus couvens que li demisele a cui il avoit son ami ocis menroit a le cort Artu, et le rendroit a Gavain le neveu le roi. 'Et je croi bien qu'il le traira a se volenté, u au mains le remenroit a le maison son pere.' Et li cevaliers li respondi: 'Sire ce ferai jou molt volentiers, mais or me dites de par cui je me rendrai prisonnier

[1] The fight is given with much more detail by D.

quant je venrai a le cort le rice roi Artu?' Et il respondi: 'De par Perceval le Galois, qui est entrés en la queste del Graal. Et encor vous ai je oblié a dire que se vous ne trovés mon segnor Gavains, que vous bailliés le demisele a le roine, car certes je ne cuit pas que Gavains i soit.'
b. 102 a. Et li cevaliers respondi: 'Sire je ferai del tout a vostre volenté, mais je vos requier que ançois que vous vous en alés, ne jou autresi, que vous mangiés avuec moi, et puis si m'en irai plus liement la u vous m'avés commandé.' Et Percevaus respondi com cil qui grant mestier (50 *c*) en avoit, que ce fera il molt volentiers. Atant s'en vinrent au tref, et quant il furent ens entrés li cevaliers commanda li demiseles qu'eles fesissent au cevalier bel samblant, et si com il les ot rové et commandé si le fisent eles, et li afublerent un mantel molt rice, et les tables furent mises, et s'asisent au mangier, et orent a grant plenté. Et quant il orent mangié si se leverent et Percevaus demanda ses armes, et on li aporta, et il s'arma, et quant il fu armés si monta sur son ceval, et li cevaliers refist autretel et fist monter ses demiseles et li demisele autresi que Percevaus avoit illuec amenée. Et bien saciés que quant ele si parti de Perceval qu'ele demena molt grant duel, et sambla
b. 102 b. bien au samblant qu'ele mostra qu'ele amast miels a tenir sa compagnie que la compagnie au cevalier, mais estre ne pooit, car Percevaus pensa molt a autre cose.

Ensi se departirent et li cevaliers cevauça tant qu'il vint a la cort le rice roi Artu, et Artus estoit en sa maistre sale et avuec lui li roine qui molt estoit bele, et maint buen cevalier qui a le cort estoient venu. Et li cevaliers vint en le sale que Percevaus i avoit envoié et salua le roi: et la roine et tous les barons en après, et li dist: 'Sire, a vous me rent et en la vostre prison, et cis demiseles que vous poés ci veoir, a faire le votre volonté, de par Perceval

le Galois, et cele demisele que vous veés la envoie a mon[1] segnor Gavain, et se mesire Gavains n'i est si manda la roine qu'ele le recoive, car ele est de molt grant parenté, et il meisme vous salue tous.'

(50 *d*) Quant li rois Artus l'oï si en fu molt liés, et le retint de sa maisnie et li clama sa prison cuite, et la roine prist le demisele si li fist bel samblant et molt grant onor, por l'amor de monsegnor Gavains cui ele estoit cosine.[2] Ensi remest li cevaliers a le cort le roi Artu, et fu puis molt amés a le cort des barons.[3] [4]Et Percevaus quant il fu departis del chevalier cevauça toute jor, qu'onques aventure ne trova, et aproisma li vespres, et il proia Nostre Segnor qu'il li envoiast ostel u il se peüst herbergier, car il en avoit . j . mauvais eü la nuit devant, et lors garda par devant lui, si vit aparoir parmi l'espesse de le forest le pumel d'une tor, qui molt estoit biaus et gros ; et quant Percevaus le vit si en ot molt grant joie et cevauça cele part grant aleure, et quant il vint la si vit que ce estoit li plus biaus castiaus del monde, et vit le pont abaissié, et le porte desfermée, si entra ens[5] tot a ceval, et vint au perron devant le sale, et descendi et atacha son ceval a . j . anel, et monta amont tous armés l'espée çainte. Et quant il fu amont el palais si garda amont et aval, et ne vit home ne fame, et vint a une cambre et entra dedens et garda partout, mais il n'i vit home ne feme. Et Percevaus revint arriere ens el palais, si s'en mervella molt, et dist : *D.*

[1] Knight is to hand over maiden to care of queen 'de par Gauven qui niece ele estoit.' This is repeated later on : 'dites qu'ele est niece mon seygnor G.'

[2] Again, 'qui est niece G.'

[3] et fust puis compagnon G. et fu mort en sa compaingnie la ou G. fust finez.

[4] or dist le livres que.

[5] et tantost ferma la porte après lui meisme.

'Par Diu, mervelles puis veoir car ceste sale est si joncie, et si sai bien qu'il n'a mie lonc tans qu'il i ot gent, et or n'i voi nului.' Lors s'en revint en mi le sale et vit devant les[1] fenestres . j . eskekier de fin argent, et par desus l'eskekier avoit uns eskés de blanc ivoire et de noir, et estoient assis autresi com por juer. Et quant Percevaus vit les eskés (51 *a*) si biaus, si vint cele part et regarda les eskés molt longement, et quant il les ot assés regardés si prist les eskés, si les manoia, et en bouta un avant, et li eskés retraist contre lui. Quant Percevaus vit les eskés qui traioient contre lui, si le tint a molt grant mervelle et retrait un autre eskec, et uns autres retrait contre lui, et quant Percevaus le vit si s'asist et commença a juer, et tant jua que par . iij . fois le mata li gius, et quant Percevaus vit çou si en ot molt grant engagne, et dist: 'Par la foi que je doi a Nostre Segnor, grant mervelle voi, car je cuidoie tant de ce giu savoir et il m'a maté par . iij . fois, et je ai dehait quant jamais moi ne autre cevalier matera ne fera honte.' Lors prist les eskés au pan de son hauberc et vint a le fenestre et les volt jeter en l'aigue que desous couroit. Issi com il les devoit laissier aler si li escria une demisele qui desus lui estoit a une fenestre en haut et li dist: 'Cevaliers vostre cuers vous a esmeu a molt grant vilenie faire qui les eskés volés ensi jeter en l'aigue, et saciés que si vous les getés vous ferés grant mal.' Et Percevaus li dist. 'Demisele, se vous volés venir aval, saciés que je n'en i geterai nul.' Et ele respondi: 'Je n'i iroie pas, mais jetés les arriere sor l'eskekier si ferés que cortois.' 'Qu'est ce, demisele? dist Percevaus, vous ne volés faire rien por moi, et vous volés que je face por vous, mais, par saint Nicholai, se vous ne venés ça jus je les i geterai!' Et quant li demisele l'oi ensi parler si li

[1] une fenestre d'argent et une eschais d'ivre sus.

dist: 'Sire cevaliers, or metés les eskés arriere, et ançois descenderai jou que vous les i getés.' Et quant Percevaus l'oï, si en fu molt liés, et vint a l'eskekier et rasist (51 *b*) les eskés deseure, et il meïsme par aus seus si raseoient miels que nus hom ne les i peust raseïr. Lors vint la damoisele parmi l'uis d'une cambre, et puceles avuec li bien desci a .x., et .iij.[1] serjant devant ele qui molt estoient bien afaitiés, car, si tost com il virent Perceval, si s'en corurent a lui desarmer, et li osterent le hiaume de le teste, et li osterent les cauces, et li sacierent le hauberc del dos, et il remest en pur le cors, et saciés que ce estoit le plus biaus cevaliers qu'on seüst. Et doi vallet corurent a son ceval et l'establerent, et une demisele li aporta .j. mantel d'escarlate cort, et l'en afubla, et puis l'en mena *D.* en le cambre avuec le demisele de la maison qui molt grant joie en fist par samblant, et bien saciés que ce estoit li plus bele demisele del monde. Et quant Percevaus le vit si l'en ama molt durement et dist en son cuer que molt sera fols se il ne li requiert s'amor puis qu'il est o lui a si grant loisir, et ensi com il l'ot pensé si le fist, si l'en requist molt durement, et essaia en maintes manieres, et tant que li demisele dist: 'Sire, se m'aïst Dex, saciés que je molt volentiers vous oisse de çou que vous me requerés se je cuidasse que vous en fuissés ausi en grant par fait com vous estes par parole, et neporquant saciés que je pas ne vous mescroi de çou que vous m'avez dit, et se vous voliés faire çou que je vous requerroie saciés que je vous ameroie, et feroie segnor de cest castel. Quant Perceval l'oi si en fu molt (51 *c*) liés et li dist: 'Demisele, il n'est riens el mont, se vous le me requerés, que je ne face, mais or dites çou qui vous plaist. Et ele respondi: 'Si vous me poés prendre le blanc cerf qui en cele forest *D.*

[1] ·iiii· serjans.

maint, et m'en aportissés le cief avuec vous, saciés qu'a tos jors mais serai votre amie, et saciés que je vous baillerai . j . tel braket qui molt est buens et vrais, car si tost que vous l'arés laissié aler il ira droitement la u li cers est, et vous alés après grant aleüre, et li colpés le cief et le m'aportés.' Et Percevaus respondi: 'Dame, volentiers, et saciés, se Dex me done vie, que je cuit bien faire tot çou que vous m'avés dit.' Atant vinrent les serjant a le demisele avant et misent les tables, et s'asisent au mangier, et orent assés qu'anqu'il volrent. Après mangier se leverent et alerent aval le cort, Percevaus et li demisele, tant que tans fu del aler coucier. Lors vinrent li serjant a Perceval et le descauçierent, et le coucierent en . j . bel lit qu'il orent aparellié, et Percevaus s'i couça, et saciés qu'il dormi molt petit le nuit, car il pensa molt a le demisele et a son afaire.

d. Au matin, quant li aube fu crevée, si leva Percevaus et prist ses armes, si s'arma, et doi vallet li amenerent son ceval, et il i monta, et li demisele vint avant et li dona son braket, et li commanda que, si cier qu'il avoit s'amor, qu'il li gardast. Et Percevaus respondi: 'Demisele, par Diu, il n'est riens que je ne volsisse miels avoit perdu que le braket' (51 *d*), et le mist sor le col del ceval par devant lui, et prist congié a le demisele, et s'en torna grant aleüre, tant qu'il vint en le forest, si mist le braket jus et le laissa aler, et li braket entra en la trace del cerf et ala tant qu'il vint en . j . buisson, et l'esmut, et li cers s'en fui qui estoit blans comme nois et grant et ramus. Et quant Percevaus le vit si en fu molt liés et feri ceval des esporons, et li cevaus l'emporta si durement que toute li forest en retenti. Et que vous feroie lonc conte? tant le caça li brakès que tout le recrei, et le tenoit par les . ij . cuisses, tot coi, et Percevaus, qui molt en ot grant joie, descent errament et

li trença le teste, et dist a lui meisme qu'il le penderoit a sa sele. A çou qu'il entendoit a le teste torser, si vint une vielle sor . j . palefroi grant aleure, et prist le braket et s'en *D.* torna a tout. Et quant Percevaus le vit si en fu molt irıés, et monta erramment et point après a esporon tant qu'il le rataint, et le prist par les espaules, et l'aresta, et li dist, 'Dame, par amors, rendés moi mon braket, car çou est grans vilenie que vous ensi vous en alés.'

Quant la vielle, qui molt fu felenesse, entendi Perceval si li dist: 'Biaus Sire chevaliers, mal dehait ait qui mi aresta, et qui ce dist que li brakès fust onques vostre, car je croı miels que vous l'aiés emblé, et saciés que je le rendrai a celi cui ço est, car vous n'i avés nul droit.' Et quant Percevaus l'oı sı li dist: 'Dame, se vous ne me le rendés par amor, saciés que je m'en courecerai, et sı n'en pòrterés mie, si vaura dont pıs qu'il ne fait ore.' Et ele respont · (52 *a*) 'Biaus Sire, force n'est mie drois, et force me poés vous bien faire, mais se vous volés faire çou que je vous dirai je le vous rendrai sans noise.' Et Percevaus lı dist: 'Or dites que çou est, et je le ferai se je puis car saciés que je n'ai cure de comencier meslée a vous.' Et ele respont: 'Ci devant sor cel cemin troveras . j . tombel et deseure . j . cevalier paint, et tu iras avant et li dıras que faus[1] fu qui illuec le painst; et puis, quant tu aras ce fait, *D.* si vien a moi et je te rendrai ton braket.' Et Percevaus respondi: 'Por çou ne le perdrai je mie.' Lor s'en vint au tombel, et li dist · 'Dans cevaliers, faus fu qu'illuec[2] vous painst,' et quant il ot ce dit, et il s'en revenoit, si oı une si grant noise arriere soi, qu'il s'en regarda, et vit venir . j . cevalier de molt grant aleure, par deseur . j . si grant ceval tot noir que ce sambloit une grant mervelle, et

[1] faux fust qui illuec femist.

[2] dans cevaliers faus fu qu'illuec vous mist.

estoit armés de toutes armes, et toutes ses armes estoient plus noires qu'onques fust aremens.[1]

Quant Percevaus vit le chevalier si s'en esfrea, et se segna si tost com il le vit, car il estoit si grans que molt faisoit a redouter, mais, puis qu'il ot fait sor lui le signe de le veraie crois, cuelli force et hardement, et li retorna errament le cief de son ceval; et s'entrevinrent de molt grant aleure, et se hurterent si angoisseusement qu'il defroissierent et lances et escus, et s'entrecontrerent des cors, et des pis, et des hiaumes si angoisseusement que li cuer lor esquasserent dedens les cors, et orent si lor veü estorblées qu'il ne sorent qu'il devinrent, et perdirent et resnes et enarmes (52 *b*) et verserent a terre si roidement que a poi que li cuer ne lor creverent, et eüssiés ançois alés .ij.[2] arpens qu'il
c. seussent qu'il fussent devenu, ne que li uns seüst quel part li autres ala. Et quant sens et memoire lor fu revenus, si se leverent, et sacierent lor espées, et prisent lor escus, et s'en revint li uns vers l'autre.

Li cevaliers del tombel requist Perceval par molt grant air, et le fiert de l'espée parmi le hiaume, mais tant fu durs qu'il ne le pot empirer, et Percevaus li rekeurt sus molt aigrement, et le suit si près qu'il li fait vuidier estal, et le feri de l'espée parmi le hiaume si qu'il li a trencié, et le coife autresi, et le navra en le teste a le senestre partie, et le hurta si durement qu'il le fist canceler, et bien saciés que si l'espée ne li fust tornée ens el puing qu'il l'eüst mort. Mais li cevaliers reprist les enarmes, et li recourut sus par molt grant ire, et Percevaus se desfendi. A çou qu'il estoient illuec en mi le pré si vint uns chevaliers sor aus, bien armés de toutes armes, et prist le teste del cerf, et le braket que li vielle tenoit, si s'en torna qu'il onques ne lor dist mot.

[1] erraument (beginning next phrase). [2] .j.

Quant Percevaus vit ce si en fu molt desconfortés, ne il *D.*
ne le pot suivre por li cevalier qui molt durement l'asaloit, lors crut a Perceval force et hardemens, et corut le cevalier sus de molt grant aïr, et li cevaliers ne le pot plus soufrir, et le redouta molt, et s'en torna vers son tombel grant aleure, et li tombiaus se leva encontre mont et li cevaliers se feri dedens. et Percevaus se cuida (52 *c*) après le chevalier lancier, mais il ne pot car le tombiaus se flati si durement après le chevalier que li terre en crolla après. Perceval, qui molt en ot grant mervelle de çou qu'il ot veü e[n] vint au tombel, et huça le cevalier par . iij . fois mais il ne li respondi nient. Et quant Perceval vit qu'il ne parleroit si s'en revint arriere vers son ceval, et monta, et sivi le cevalier grant aleure qui se teste et son braket emportoit, et dist que jamais ne finira si l'ara retrové, Ensi com il cevauçoit, si vit le vielle devant lui qui l'arcel li avoit ensagnie, et Percevaus point vers li et li demanda qui li cevaliers estoit del tombel, et s'ele counissoit celui qui son braket emporte? Et quant li vielle l'oi si li dist; 'Dans chevaliers mal dehait ait qui de çou m'aparlera dont je ne *D.*
sai riens, mais se vous l'avés perdu si querés que vous l'aiés retrové, car a moi ne monte rien de vostre afaire.' Et quant Percevaus oi qu'il ne trouveroit en li nule raison, si le commanda a diables, et s'en torna après le chevalier qui se teste et son braket emportoit, et cevauça grant partie de le saison qu'onques de le cevalier n'oi ensagne. Tant cevauça parmi les forests et parmi les boskages que molt i trova d'aventures, mais teus aventure le mena qu'il vint . j . jor [1] en le gaste forest u se mere avoit conversé, et ses pere autresi, et estoit li castiaus remest a une demisele qui estoit suer Perceval.

Quant Percevaus vint en le forest si ne s'i recounu nule

[1] qu'il se basti sor la maison son pere ou il fust neez.

cose, car molt avoit lonc tans qu'il n'i avoit (52 *d*) esté, mais com aventure le mena si s'i adreça et vint en la maison tot a ceval, et quant li demisele qui estoit sa suer le vit si li corut a l'estrier, et li dist: 'Sire chevaliers, descendés car vous arés molt buen ostel si vous volés demorer hui mais dusqu'a demain.' Et Percevaus respont:
b. 'Demisele, saciés que je ne ving por el.'[1] Atant descendi Percevaus, et li demisele li corut a l'estrier et li aida molt debuenairement, et avuec li . ij . soies demiseles, qui estoient ses nieces et li aidierent a desarmer, et quant il fu desarmés si li aporta li demisele qui se suer estoit . j . sorchot de soie molt bel, et s'asist dejoste lui et le regarda molt durement, et commença a plorer. Et quant Percevaus le vit plorer si en fu molt dolans et li demanda qu'ele avoit qu'ensi ploroit, et cele li a respondu · 'Sire, je le vos dirai.

Sire, jou ai un frere jovne baceler, et je ere se suer, et fumes ambedui d'un pere et d'une mere.[2] Si avint que nos pere morut si com Diu plot, et bien saciés que Jesus Christ i envoia le vois del Saint Esperit a son trespassement. Quant il fu mors mes frere s'en ala a le cort le rice roi Artu. Sire, mes frere estoit molt jovnes, et de molt povre essiant, et me mere en fu molt dolante, et tel duel en ot
c. qu'ele en feri en tel maladie qu'ele en morut. Or sai bien que li pecié de ma mere l'a encombré.' Et quant Percevaus l'oi si li dist: 'Bele suer, saciés que je sui Percevaus li vostre frere, qui a le cort le rice roi Artu en ala.' Quant li demisele l'oi si en fu molt lie, et sali sus en plorant, et l'acola, et le baisa plus de . c . fois, et Percevaus li ensement, et fisent molt grant joie li uns (53 *a*) de l'autre, et

[1] et je en ai molt grant mestier.

[2] D. gives father's name, and prophecy as to accomplishment of Grail ques ; summary of previous history. D. is much more detailed here but very confused.

[1] tant que li demisele li demanda se il avoit esté a le cort son taion le rice Roi Pescheor, et Percevaus li dist: 'Bele suer je n'i ai pas encore esté, et si l'ai quis molt longement, et plus a de .iij. ans que je le vois querant, et saciés bele suer que je jamais n'aresterai si l'arai trové.' Li demisele respond: 'Biaus frere, Dex te laist si faire a se volenté que tu soies a son plaisir.'

Ensi com li uns parloit a l'autre et faisoient grant joie li uns de l'autre, si vinrent li vallet a le demisele en le maison; et quant il virent que lor demisele baisoit si forment *D. 106 a.* Perceval si en orent molt grant duel et disent que molt est fole lor demisele qu'ensi baise cel estrange chevalier, et li demisele les apela avant, et lor dist: 'Bele maisnie, saciés que çou est ci Percevaus mes frere qui si jovnes s'en ala de çaiens.' Quant li vallez l'ont oi si en furent molt lie, et fisent de lui grant joie, et quant il orent mangié si l'apela le demisele, et li dist: 'Biaus frere, jou ai molt grant paor de vous qu'ensi alés, car molt estes jovnes, et li cevalier qui vont par le pais si sont molt cruel et molt felon, et saciés que, se il pueent, il vous ociront por le vostre ceval gaagnier; mais se vous m'en creés, biaus frere, vous lairés ester ceste painne la u vous estes entrés, et demoerés avuec moi, car çou est grans peciés de chevalier ocire, et si estes cascuns jor en grant peril de le mort recevoir.'

'Certes, dist Perceval, bele suer, saciés que je molt volentiers demoerroie se je avoie acomplie la queste u je sui entrés, et si tost com je l'arai acomplie je revenrai a *D 106 b.* vous, et vous conselleraï et aiderai a mon pooir, mais desci adont (53 *b*) que je l'aie acomplie ne demoeroie je pas.' Et quant le demisele l'oi si en plora molt tendrement et li dist: 'Perceval, biaus dos frere, dont vous vuel je proier que

[1] molt se mervella de ce que ele li ot dit que li hons et li graaux estoit son aiol.

vous faciés çou que je vous proierai.' Et il li respont: 'Bele suer, dites moi çou que vous volés, et je le ferai.' Et ele li respondi: 'Je vuel que vous venés avueques moi a le maison .j. vostre oncle qui est hermites, et si est molt preudom; et maint en ceste forest, desci a demie liue lonc de ci, et vous confesserés a lui, et prendrés penitance de le nostre mere qui por vous morut; et saciés qu'il vous en consellera a son pooir; et gardés que vous faites çou qu'il vous commandera, car il est molt sains hom, et vint en cest pais de devers Jerusalem de le terre de Judée, et fu li uns des frere de nostre pere Alain le Gros. Et saciés que se il fait a Jesus Christ orisons que Dex vous avoit a çou trover que vous querés, saciés que, par ses proieres, i poés vous bien ançois assener, car molt fait buen oir les paroles qu'il m'a retraites del vostre ancestre, et de Joseph, et de Enigeus se mere qui fu suer Joseph, et de Bron son pere qu'on apele le Roi Pescheor, et m'a aconté que cil Bron, qui est li vostre taions, a le vaissel u li sans Nostre Segnor fu recuellois, et est cil vassiaus nomes Graaus, et m'a dist que Nostre Sire dist qu'a vous doit revenir, et vous le covenra tant querre que vous l'arés trové.'

Quant Percevaus oi ensi se seror parler si s'en esjoi molt durement, et dist qu'il ira molt volentiers a son oncle. Lors s'arma Perceval atant, et monta en son ceval, et fist sa seror monter en (53 *c*) un chaceor qu'il avoit en la maison, et s'en alerent ambedui, et tinrent lor voie desci a le maison l'ermite; et quant il vinrent a le porte si ferirent del maillet au postic; et li ermites, qui molt fu sains hom
c. et viels, s'en vint apoiant de se potence, et ouvri le postic, et Perceval descendi, et li demisele ensement, et entrerent en le maison a l'ermite, mais lor ceval demourerent par defors, car il ne porent entrer en le maison car li huis estoit si bas qu'il covint Perceval a baissier a l'entrer ens. Quant

li sains hom vit sa niece qui venue estoit avuec le chevalier, si s'en mervella molt, et li demanda por quoi çou estoit qu'ele estoit avuec cel cevalier venue ne se il l'avoit prise a reubée? Et ele li dist: 'Biaus oncles, saciés que çou est Percevaus li miens frere, et fu fius Alain le Gros, le vostre frere, qui s'en ala a le cort le rice roi Artu por armes prendre, et il, li Diu merci, i ala, et si les a.' Quant li preudom l'oi si en fu molt liés, et li dist: 'Biaus niés, dites moi, avés vous encore esté a le maison le rice Roi Pescheor, qui est mon pere, et qui li vostre taions est?' Et Percevaus li respondi qu'il l'avoit molt quis, mais il n'i avoit pas encore esté. Et li preudom respondi: 'Biaus niés, saciés que a la caisne, la u nous seymes,[1] oimes la vois del Saint Esperit qui nos commanda a aler en alienes terres vers Occidant, et si commanda Bron le mien pere qu'il i venist en ceste partie la u li solaus avaloit, et si dist la vois que de Alain le Gros naisteroit uns oirs qui le Graal aroit en se baillie, et dist que li Rois (53 *d*) Pesciere ne poroit morir *D.* dusqu'a tant que vous ariés esté a se cort, et quant vous i ariés esté il seroit garis, et vous bailleroit sa grasse et son vaissel, et seriés sire del sanc Nostre Segnor Jesus Christ.

Or gardés que vous soiés preudom, et vous proi que de chevalier ocire ne vous caille,[2] mais deportés les, et soufrés en maintes manieres, por l'ame a la vostre mere, et proiés a Nostre Segnor qu'il ait de vous pitié, car saciés que por la dolor que vostre mere ot de vous est ele morte. Or si vous proi qu'il vous en soviegne et soiés curieus de vous garder de pecier ne de faire vilainne oevre, car vous estes d'une lignie qui molt a Nostre Segnor amé, et il les a tant essauciés qu'il les a doné sa car et son sanc a garder.' Et Percevaus respondi: 'Sire, Dex me laist son service faire

[1] a la table la où Joseph sist et je meismes, oimes.

[2] ne de gesir aveuc fame quar c'est .j. peché luxurious.

en tele maniere que je soie a se volenté.' Et li preudom en pria Nostre Segnor, et assés li dist le preudom de buenes paroles que je ne vous puis retraire, mais tant vous puis je bien dire que Percevaus 1 demoura toute la nuit dusqu'al demain, que Percevaus oï le messe del preudome en le capele, et quant il ot le messe oïe, et le preudom se fu desvestus des armes a Nostre Segnor, si vint Percevaus a lui, et l'enclina molt humblement et prist congié a lui, et dist qu'il voloit aler en son afaire qu'il avoit empris; et li preudom[1] proia a Nostre Segnor qu'il li envoit tempre trover le maison son pere. Atant s'en issi Percevaus fors de le maison, et vint a son ceval, et i monta et fist monter se seror. Atant s'en torna, et li preudom demeura tot plorant, et Percevaus cevauça grant aleure entre lui et se seror qui molt avoit grant joie de son frere. (54 *a*.) Ensi com il cevauçoient, et estoient ja près de lor castel, et s'aresta joste une crois, u Percevaus aloit sovent s'esbanoier quant il manoit en le maison se mere, si vit venir . j . chevalier tot armé sor un ceval, et el venir qu'il fist s'escria molt hautement, 'Par Diu, dans cevaliers, saciés que le demisele n'en poés vous pas mener se envers moi ne le poés calengier. Et Percevaus l'oï molt bien, mais ainc mot ne li respondi, ains estoit si pensis a son afaire qu'il ne pensoit rien a çou que cil cevaliers li escrioit. Et li chevaliers, qui molt en fu dolans, vint cevauçant par molt grant aleüre, et avoit le lance brandie, et bien saciés qu'il en eust Perceval feru si se suer ne li eust escrié, et li dist: 'Perceval biau frere, gardés vous, u cis chevaliers vous ocira!' Quant Percevaus l'oï si le tint a grant mervelle, car tant pensoit a son afaire et a le demisele qui son braket li avoit baillié, qu'il ne se dounoit garde del chevalier, mais quant il l'ot quoisi si torna le cief de son ceval, et le

[1] li dit: 'Saluez moi Bron mon pere si vus le trovez.'

laissa corre vers celui qui venoit. Et li chevaliers revint d'autele maniere encontre lui, et fist cascuns grant samblant de son compagnon grever.

Li cevaliers feri Perceval de le lance en l'escu, si qu'il li frainst et perça, mais li haubers fu fors, qu'il ne le pot empirier; si vola se hanste en asteles. Et Percevaus li ra se hanste assise en l'escu de tel air qu'il i mist toute sa force, et bien saciés que ainc escus ne haubers ne li fu garans qu'il ne li mesist la lance parmi le pis, et le hurta par tel mautalent qu'il le fist voler a le terre tot estendu, et au chair qu'il fist si li creva li cuers, et morut illueques, *D.* qu'onques pié ne main ne li lait remuer. (54 *b*) Et lors li dist Perceval: 'Par Diu, dans chevaliers, par le vostre forfait vous est damages venus, et bien sai que miels vous venist que vous vous eüssiés teüt, que moi avoir sivi en tele maniere, et si m'en poise que je vous ai ocis; jou amaisse miels que je vous eüsse conquis, car grans peciés est de chevalier ocire.' Lors prist le ceval, et s'en torna et vint a se seror, et li rendi. Atant s'en tornerent grant aleure et vinrent a lor manoir, et descendirent maintenant, et li serjant a le demisele vinrent encontre aus, et prisent lor cevaus, et les menerent en l'estable, et furent molt bien aaisié, mais forment s'en mervellierent del ceval que Perceval avoit amené, et vinrent a lui, et le desarmerent molt cortoisement. Et quant il fu desarmés si misent li serjant le table, et Percevaus manga avuec se seror, et quant il ot mangié si se couça un poi dormir et por çou qu'il avoit le nuit devant vellié. Et quant il ot un poi dormi si se leva et demanda ses armes, et s'arma erraument, et quant se seror le vit armer si en ot grant dolor a son cuer, et vint a lui, si li dist: 'Qu'est çou, Perceval, biaus frere? que volés vous faire? Vous en volés vous aler *D.* sans moi, et laissier seule en ceste forest?' Et Perceval

li dist: 'Bele suer, saciés que si je puis retorner a vous en nule maniere, que je i retornerai, et vous conselleraí a mon pooir ensi com faire doi, mais a ceste fois ne vuel je plus demorer.'

Quant le demisele l'oi si en ot molt grant pitié, et plora molt tenrement, mais Perceval le reconforte au miels (54 *c*) qu'il pot, et li dist qu'au plus procainement qu'il pora revenra a li. Atant demanda son ceval, et monta isnelement com cil qui n'avoit cure de sejorner, et commanda se seror a Diu, et ele lui, tot plorant et molt irié, mais ele n'en pot el faire. Et Percevaus, puis qu'il se fu departis de se seror, cevauça tot le jor qu'onques aventure ne trova, ne ostel u il se pot herbregier; et saciés qu'il li covint le nuit gesir en le forest, et osta son ceval le frain, et pait toute nuit l'erbe, et la rousee qui molt estoit bele et drue,[1] et Perceval le gaita toute le nuit qu'onques ne dormi. Au matin, quant l'aube fu crevée, si se leva, et restrainst son ceval, et ratira ses armes, et monta, et cevauça tot le jor.

Molt li plot la matinée, car la forès estoit grande et parcreüe, et oi la matinée les oiseaus esbaudir, qui molt durement li plorent. Ensi com il cevauçoit si regarda par devant lui, et vit . j . chevalier venir sor . j . ceval, et une demisele dejoste lui, qui estoit de le plus mervelleuse faiture qu'onques nus hom veist, car saciés qu'ele avoit le col, et le viaire, et les mains plus noires que fers, et si avoit toutes les jambes tortes, et si ouel estoient plus rouge que feus, et si avoit par vreté entre . ij . uels plainne paume. Et por voir vous puis je bien dire qu'il n'en paroit sor l'arçon plus de plain pié, et avoit les piés et les jambes si croçues qu'ele ne les pooit tenir es estriers, et estoit trecie a une trece, et saciés que le trece estoit (54 *d*) corte et noire, et miels resambloit a estre li keue d'un rat qu'autre

. 108 a.

[1] et li ateingnoit jusqu'al ventre.

cose ne fist, et cevauçoit molt orguelleusement, et tenoit se corgie en se main, et avoit mise par noblece sa jambe sor le col de son palefroi, et ensi cevauçoit encoste le chevalier, et l'acoloit et baisoit de fois a autre molt douce-
5 ment, et il li autresi.

Quant Percevaus le vit si s'aresta et se segna a merveles, et commença a rire molt durement; et quant li chevaliers le vit rire de s'amie, si en ot molt grant duel, et vint a Perceval et li demanda qu'il avoit a rire, et por quoi
10 il s'estoit ensi segniés . iij . fois.[1] Et Percevaus li respondi : *D.* 'Je le vous dirai. Quant je vis cel diable cevauçier avuec vous, saciés que je en euc paor, et por çou me segnai. Et quant je vi qu'ele vous acoloit et baisoit, si en commençai a rire por le maleurte acomplir. Mais or me
15 dites par amors, et sans corous, dont ele vous vint, et si çou est diables u feme? Car saciés, qui me donroit tot le roiaume de Logres n'en le lairoie jou en ma compagnie . iij . jors,[2] car je me douteroie qu'ele ne m'estranlast u ocesist.' Quant li chevaliers l'entendi si en ot molt grant
20 ire qu'il en devint tous vermaus, et respondi par molt grant air : 'Chevaliers, or saciés que vous ne me peüssiés avoir plus coureçié quant vous avés de celi gabé et ris que jou aim autant comme mon cuer, et qui tant me samble bele qu'il n'est dame ne demisele en cest siecle qui de biauté
25 se puist a li aparellier. Or saciés que je jamais ne mangerai si l'arai vengié de vostre cors, et si croi bien que se vous (55 *a*) en aviés autant dit en son oiant qu'ele en avroit si grant honte qu'ele en morroit, tant est ele honteuse; et s'ele moroit saciés que por l'amor de li m'ociroie, et je
30 vos desfi de ci en droit.' Et Percevaus respondi : 'Se Diu *D.* plait, de vous me cuic je bien garder.'

Lors s'entrelongierent . ij . arpens, et prisent les escus

[1] tant de fois. [2] . j . jor.

as enarmes, et drecierent lor lances encontre mont, et laissierent cevaus aler, et s'entreferirent si durement que andui s'entreabatirent des cevaus. Mais a plus tost qu'il porent releverent, et corut li uns l'autre sus molt ruistement, et se cherquierent molt ruistement as espées et feroient a maintas (sic) parmi lor hiaumes, et saciés que lor escu furent molt malement atirié, et se feroient si durement des espées que çou estoit grans mervelle qu'il ne s'entrocioient, et si fesissent il se il fussent ausi novel com il furent au commencier, mais il estoient si lassé que li colp qu'il dounoient estoient molt afoibloié. Lors si resvertua Percevaus, et ot honte de çou qu'il duroit tant contre lui, et si li recouroit sus molt durement, et le lassa tant que tout le recrei, et le fist chair en mi le pré, et li esraça li hiaume de le teste, et li eust le teste colpée, mais li cevaliers li escria merci, et que por Diu le laissast vivre. Et quant Perceval a oi que merci li requeroit si ne le dagna plus toucier, et rebouta l'espée el fuerre, et li demanda son nom, et li chevaliers respondi qu'il avoit non li Biaus Mauvais, et Perceval respondi : 'Par mon cief, dans chevaliers, en votre non a voir et si i a mençogne, (55 *b*) car Biaus Mauvais n'estes vous mie mais Biens et Biaus, se Dex m'ait.' Et lors regarda Percevaus le demisele, si ne se pot tenir qu'il ne risist et demanda au chevalier comment ele avoit non, et li chevaliers respondi qu'ele avoit non Rosete li bloie. 'Et saciés que çou est la plus cortoise demisele que nus hom sace, car avuec çou que li biautés est en li, si a ele debuenaireté encontre, et saciés que jou ameroie miels qu'on me desevrast de l'un de mes uels que de li, tant l'aim je de buene amor!' 'Par ma foi, cevaliers, dont ne seroit il mie bien cortois qui vos departiroit, mais il vos covient que vous me fienciés par foi que vous irés a le cort le rice roi Artu,

et vous rendrés prison de par moi, et si menrés cele demisele avuec vous, et le presenterés a le roine.' Et li chevaliers respont: 'Sire, ce ferai je volentiers, car il n'a buene cort el monde que je ne li oseroie bien mener, comme por cortoise et por vaillant; mais dites moi de par cui je me rendrai prison?' Et il respont: 'De par Perceval le Galois.' Et cil respont: 'Sire volentiers, saciés que je ferai de vostre volenté de moi et de li.'

Atant se departi li chevaliers de Perceval, et ala tant qu'il vint a Carduel en Gales, et ci i avoit molt granment de chevaliers et de barons, et de dames et de demiseles qu'estoient avuec le roine qui bien les savoit onerer, et avoit li rois oi le messe, et avuec lui se' baron, et le roine erent entré en le sale, et Kex le senescaus avuec le roïne, et le roine estoit entrée en sa cambre et Kex s'apoia a une fenestre, et vit le chevalier (55 *c*) venir qui s'amie amenoit a le cort et s'en venoient molt orguelleusement.

Quant Kex le senescaus vit le demisele venir si en ot molt grant joie en son cuer, et sali jus de le fenestre, et vint a courant en le cambre la u li roine estoit, et li dist, 'Dame, venés veoir, saciés que ci vient uns chevaliers qui amainne le plus bele demisele avuecques lui qu'onques veist nus hom, car tout celes de le vostre cort n'ont nient de biauté envers le soie, mais por Diu or penser de li onerer, et de faire tant qu'ele demourast avuec vous; et ausi m'ait Dex que jou volroie en buene foi que toutes celes del roiaume de Logres fussent de se biauté.' Et la roïne respond: 'Biaus Sire Kex, ce ne volroie je mie, car *D.* saciés que vous m'ariés mise en grant painne et en grant malaventure, que vous et li autre chevalier de çaiens les me volriés toutes tolir!' Lors dist a ses demiseles: 'Alons la fors por veir se cele demisele a si grant biauté com Kex li senescaus nos fait entendant.' Lors s'en vinrent as

fenestres de le sale, et quant eles virent venir le chevalier et le demisele si s'en esmervellierent molt, et se segnierent forment, et commencierent a rire, et li roine huça ses puceles et lor dist, tot riant: 'Demiseles, or poés vous bien savoir que Kex li senescaus nous aimme durement, car grant onor vous a hui sohaidié.' Et Kex vint au roi et as barons et lor dist qu'il venissent veoir, et li rois et li baron s'en vinrent as fenestres, et avuec la (55 *d*) roine, et commencierent a gaber, et li roine aconta le roi et les barons le souhait Keu, et il en commencierent tot a rire et en faire grant joie.

Atant vint li cevaliers, et descendi devant le sale, et prist se demisele entre ses bras, et le mist molt doucement jus del palefroi, et s'en vinrent andui en le sale main a main, et vinrent andoi devant le roi Artu, et li cevaliers s'aresta enmi le sale et salua le roi et tous les barons de par Perceval le Galois, et si dist qu'il se metoit en sa prison de par lui. 'Et me demisele Rozain,[1] qui tant a le vis cler, que jou aim autant et plus que mon cuer, a il envoiée a la roine por metre en ses cambres.' Et quant Kex li senes-
c. caus l'a oi si ne se pot tenir qu'il ne parlast, et dist a le roine: 'Dame merciés l'ent, et si vous proi que vous l'en alés au pié car tel present vous a hui doné que jamais n'iert eure que vous n'en soiés onerée, et les puceles de vos cambres; et nonporquant se vous le reteniés jou aroie paor que li rois ne l'amast dejoste vous.' Et lors pria le roi que par cele foi qu'il li devoit qu'il demandast le chevalier u il le prist, et se il en i avoit plus, et se il en poroit recovrer se il i aloit. Quant li rois oi Keu li senescaus si s'en coureça et li dist: 'Keu, par la foi que vous devés Diu, laissiés vous ester, car çou est grans vilenie de gaber . j . estrange chevalier, et vous n'i gaagniés

[1] not named.

nule rien, et si vous en faites hair.' Et Kex li respondi: 'Sire, saciés que je ne le di por nule mal, ains le di por le preu au chevalier, car saciés que se je l'avoie menée en une estrange cort, que je aroie paor qu'on ne le me tolsist.' Et (56 *a*) quant le rois l'oi si s'en coureça, et li dist: 'Keu, ausi soiés vous aidiés que vous ne savés miels que vous dites, et je vous commant que vous n'en parlés plus.' Lors vint au chevalier et l'acola, et li clama se prison cuite, et li dist qu'il voloit qu'il fust de se maisnie d'illuec en avant, et la damoisele seroit en ses cambres avuec la roine. Et Keu le senescaus ne se pot tenir, et dist: 'Sire, dont est il buen que vous li donés treves des barons de çaiens, car vous ne garderés l'eure qu'il l'en aront portée por se biauté, et je counois tant le cevalier qui la est que se il l'en estoit mescheü qu'il vous en apeleroit; et jou aie mal dehé se jou vous en desfendoie!' Et quant Artus l'entendi si s'en coureça molt, et dist: 'Keu, saciés que trop estes cruels de parole et pognans, et, par la foi que je doi Diu et l'ame Uter-pandragon mon pere, que se ne fust por la fiance que je fis Entor le vostre pere, que vous jamais ne seriés senescaus.' Et puis embronça son viaire, et dist a soi meisme: 'Je l'en devroie bien soufrir, car toutes ces teces a il par le feme qui le nouri quant il fu sevrés de se mere por moi.' Et lors vint Keu et fist samblant qu'il fu coureçiés, et dist: 'Au jor aie je dehé que je de li garder enterrai en soing, mais bien vous en couviegne des ore mais.' Ensi com vous avés oi demoura le demisele a le cort le rice roi Artu, et bien saciés que le demisele fu puis la plus bele qu'on seüst. *D 109 d.*

Or dist li livres que quant Perceval se fu partis del chevalier[1] si erra grant partie del tans et de le saison, et

[1] chevaucha grant aleure une piece du jor tant qu'il guarda devant lui si vit.

parmi landes et parmi castiaus, qu'onques ne pot trover le maison son taion, et molt i trova d'aventures, et tant qu'il cevauça . j . jor (56 *b*) parmi une grant forest et garda devant lui, et vit . j . des plus biaus prés del monde, et dejoste cel pré si avoit . j . molt bel gués, et outre le gué si avoit . j . pavellon tendu, et Percevaus cevauça cele part grant aleüre, et vint au gué, et volt entrer ens, et si com il volt abevrer son ceval, si sali uns chevaliers del pavellon molt ricement armés, et vint grant aleure a Perceval et li escria : 'Por Diu, dans cevaliers, sacés que vous mar i estes 1
entrés, et le gué vous covenra il comperer.' Atant s'eslaissa a lui, et le volt ferir de le lance, quant il s'apensa, et vit que li chevaliers n'avoit lance ne escu, car Percevaus s'estoit combatus a un chevalier qui tout son escu li avoit depecié. Lors retorna arriere, et vint a une demisele qui 1
estoit a l'uis del tref, et li dist qu'ele aportast au chevalier une lance et . j . escu qu'ens el tref pendoit, car ce li sambleroit hontes se il jostoit a lui sans escu ; et ensi com il ot commandé li demisele le fist, et le bailla a Perceval, qui molt en fu liés en son cuer. Et li chevaliers li escria 2
qu'il se gardast de lui car mar i avoit entré el gués sans congié, et bien se gart, car il li fera comperer se il puet.
1. 110 a. Lors s'entrecorurent sus molt ruistement, et se ferirent molt ruistement, et bien saciés que les lances volérent en piéces, et Percevaus le hurta si angoisseusement qu'il le 2
porta jus del ceval tout estendu en mi le pré, et au chaır li vola li hiaumes fors de le teste par les las qui furent rompu. Lors mist Percevaus pié a terre (56 *c*) et descendi jus del ceval, car çou samblast honte de ferir hom a pié. Lors li courut sus a l'espée et li douna tant de cols qu'il le con- 3
quist, et li pria merci, et se rendı a lui prison ; et Percevaus li dist qu'il n'aura ja de lui nule merci se il ne li dist ançois por quoi il desfent a abevrer el gué, et por quoi il joste as

chevaliers ne laidoie por tel afaire, et il li respont: 'Sire, je le vous dirai.

'Sire, saciés que jou ai non Urbains, et sui fius a le roine de le Noire Espine, et si me fist chevalier le rois Artus en se sale a Carduel, et puis qu'il m'ot fait chevalier jou errai par le pais et trovai mains chevalier, et me combati a aus, et bien vous di que je onques ne trovai chevalier que je n'outrasse d'armes. Et tant que je cevauçai[1] une nuit ensi comme aventure me menoit, et saciés que le nuit plut *D.* si bien que Dex l'avoit molt bien u prendre; et tounoit et espartissoit li airs et esclairoit si angoisseusement que je ne savoie que je peüsse devenir, et m'en aloie si angoissement tost que ce sambloit que li diables m'enportassent, et mes cevaus avoit si grant paor que je ne li pooie retenir, si m'emportoit maugré mi. Et saciés que derriere moi venoit uns esfrois si grans que ce sambloit que li arbre esraçassent derriere moi, et en cele dolor u jou estoie si vi venir une demisele devant moi, sor . j . mul, le mellor que je onques veisse, et ensi cevauçoit grant aleüre, et si tost com je le vi si m'aroutai aprés li, et me penai molt de li ataindre (56 *d*) mais il faisoit si noire nuit que jamais ne le coneüsse, ne fust par le ciel qui espartissoit, et tant le sivi qu'ele entra en . j . des plus biaus castiaus del monde, et je me ferai après li, et si tost com ele entra en le sale si fui jou avuec li. Et quant ele me vit el chastel si vint encontre moi, et m'acola, et me fist jus metre mes armes, et me fist le nuit molt rice ostel, et je m'eshardi tant le nuit que je l'amai, et li requis s'amor, et ele me dist qu'ele m'ameroit volentiers par . j . covent qu'ele i metroit, et je li dis que je feroie del tout a se volenté, ja cele cose ne me diroit; et ele me dist que se je voloie illuec demourer avuec li, et que je n'alaisse par le pais, qu'ele seroit m'amie. Et je dis

[1] et tant que je chevauchai par mie une forest.

que je feroie se volenté, mais molt me seroit grief se je laissoie le chevalerie ester. Et ele dist: 'Biaus amis, veés illuec . j . gué, et vous tendrés illuec . j . pavellon, et nus chevalier qui voist par le pais, ne verra cest castel fors le pavellon, et josterés as chevaliers qui volront abevrer el gué, et ensi porés avoir le deduit de moi et maintenrés chevalerie.' Et je li otroiai ensi, et ai mes près d'un [1] an a cest gué avuec m'amie, et ai puis ce di eü quanque je voloie. Et li castiaus siet illuec dejoste le pavellon que tu pues veïr, mais le castel ne poroit nus veir fors moi seule. ment et m'amie, et les demiseles qui avuec li sont. Et bien saciés qu'il n'a que . viii . jors desci a mon an, et se cist . viii . jors fussent passé jou eusse esté li mieldres chevaliers del monde, mais Dex ne l'a m'a mie consenti. (57*a*) Or saces que je sui a ton commandement d'ocire u
c. de laier vivre, et tu demoerras ici se tu vuels, et garderas le gué, desci a un an, et se tu vuels demourer . j . an tu auras le pris del siecle, porouec que tu ne soies conquis de chevalier.'

Quant Percevaus l'entendi si li respondi: 'Amis, saciés que je n'i demouerroie mie en nule maniere, mais je vuel que vous laiez le gué ester, et que jamais cevalier qui ci endroit viegne ne destorbés.' Et li cevaliers respont: 'Sire, je ferai, quel gré que je en aie, vostre plaisir, car je vois bien que vous estes au desus de moi.' Tot ensi com Perceval parloit au chevalier et il li desfendoit le Gué Perellos a garder, si oi une si grant tumulte qu'il li sambla que toute le forès fondist en abisme, et de cele noise, qui si grans estoit, issi une fumée et une si grans tenebrors que li uns ne pot veir l'autre, si fust on alé près de demie liue. De cele tenebrors si issi une vois molt grans et molt dolerouse, et dist itant: 'Perceval li Galois maléois soies

[1] . vii . anz,

tu de quanques nos poons faire entre nous dames, car tu nous fais hui la forçor dolor avoir qu'onques mais eüssiemes, et bien saces qu'il t'en venra molt grant painne.' Et quant il ot ce dit, si s'escria li vois au chevalier qu'illuec estoit dejoste Perceval tost qu'il n'i arrestast, et li dist: 'Se vous plus i demourés vous me perdrés.' Et quant li chevaliers oi le vois si fu tos esmaris, et vint a Perceval et li escria por Diu merci plus de . c . fois. Et quant Percevaus le vit ensi merci crier si s'en esmervella molt, et li demanda por quoi il li crioit merci (57*b*) si durement. Et li chevaliers respondi: 'Ha, sire cevaliers, por Diu laissiés m'ent aler, et me donnés congié!' Et Perceval se teut, et se mervella molt de la vois, et li chevaliers corut a son ceval, et voloit monter, mais Percevaus le saisi au pan de son hauberc, et li dist: 'Chevaliers, par mon cief, tot ensi ne m'escaperés vous mie!'

Quant li cevaliers l'oi si en fu molt espoentés, et s'en retorna par devers lui, et li escria plus de . c . fois merci, et que por Diu ne l'arestast, et se il plus demouroit il s'ociroit. Et lors r'a oie la vois qui li dist: 'Urbains, haste toi, u tu m'aras perdue des or mais!' Et quant li chevaliers a oi le vois si se pasma, et Perceval fu tous esbahis, et le regarda a mervelles,[1] et lors vit entor lui si grant plenté d'oisiaus que tous li airs entor lui en fu couvers, et estoient plus noir qu'onques rien qu'eust veüe, et li voloient parmi le hiaume les uels esracier de le teste. Et quant Percevaus les vit si en fu molt durement esbahis, et lors revint li chevalier de pasmison, et regarda entor Perceval, si vit les oisiaus, et lors sali sus si commença molt grant joie a faire, et a rire molt durement, et dist: 'Dehait aie jou se je ne vous aie!' Lors prist l'escu as enarmes et l'espée en le *D.*

[1] D. here inserts efforts of knight to escape, but much more briefly than in M.

main, et recourut Perceval sus, et quant Perceval vit çou si en ot molt grant engagne, et li escria: 'Dans chevaliers, revuels tu donques mellée commencier?' Et dist li chevaliers: 'Je vos desfi!' Lors s'entrecorurent sus as espées nues molt ruistement, (57*c*) mais a Perceval en estoit le pis, car li oisel le tenoient si cort qu'a poi qu'il ne l'abatoient a le terre. Et quant Percevaus le vit, si en ot molt grant iror, et tint l'espée el puing destre, et fiert · j · oisel, qui plus cort le tenoit, tres parmi liu del cors, si qu'il li fist salir le bouelee, et cai a le terre, et au cair qu'il fist si devint une feme morte, et ert de le plus bele faiture qu'il onques mais veist. Et quant Percevaus le vit si en ot molt grant duel de çou qu'il le vit morte, et li oisel qui entor lui estoient se traisent arriere, et corurent vers le cors et l'enporterent en air. Et quant Percevaus vit qu'il en fut delivrés si corut vers le chevalier, et li chevaliers li pria por Diu merci, et qu'il ne l'ocesist, et Percevaus li respondi: 'Dont me di quele mervelle çou est que jou ai veüe?' Et cil respondi · 'Sire, je le vos dirai volentiers.

'Or saces que li noise que tu ois, et la tumulte si grans, saces que ce fu li castiaus a me demisele qu'ele depeça por l'amor de moi, et li vois que tu ois ce fu ele qui me huça, et quant ele vit que je ne me pooie de toi escaper si mist li et ses demiseles en samblances d'oisiaus, et vinrent ci por toi damagier, et por moi secorre; et quant je les vi si me peuc tenir que je ne lor alaisse aidier, et t'eüssiemes mort, mais je voi bien que nus ne te puet empirer, et sai certainement que tu es preudom envers Diu, et uns des mellors chevaliers del monde, et cele que tu navras, ele fu suer a m'amie, mais ele n'aura garde car or ces eures est ele en Avalon. Mais por Diu te vuel je proier que tu m'en laisses aler a me demisele qui encor m'atant.' Et quant Perceval (57*d*) l'a oi si en commença a rire, et l'en

a doné buenement le congié, et quant li chevaliers l'oi si en ot molt grant joie, et s'en torna tot a pié grant aleüre, car si grant joie a de çou qu'il li a doné congié qu'onques de ceval ne li souvint. Et n'ot mie eslongié Perceval . ij . arpens quant Percevaus se regarda, et vit qu'on l'emportoit a la forçor joie del monde, et vint a son ceval, et monta qu'il les cuida ataindre, mais a paine fu il montés quant il ne vit ne les demiseles ne lui ne le ceval meisme que joste lui estoit, et quant Percevaus le vit si le tint a grant mervelle, et s'en retorna arriere, et dist que folie li feroit porsivir.

Atant s'en torna d'illuec, et tint se voie molt pensis de son afaire, et molt souvent le resouvenoit de le mervelle qui lui estoit avenue. Ensi cevauça tot le jor qu'onques ne but ne ne manga, et li recovint le nuit gesir en le forest, ausi com il avoit fait le nuit devant. Et au matin s'en torna et tint son cemin si com aventure le menoit. Ensi cevauça tot le jor qu'onques aventure ne trova, ne ostel u il se peüst herbregier, et saciés qu'il li anuia molt, car il ne trovoit se haies non et buissons et boschages ; si en avoit molt grant duel en son cuer. Et ensi com il cevauçoit molt dolans et molt pensis, et estoit bien none passée, et si regarda par devant lui, si vit . j . des plus biaus arbres qu'il eust onques mais veü, et estoit sor le forc de . iiij . voies par dejouste une molt bele crois, et quant Percevaus le vit si se torna cele part, et ci aresta molt longement, et ensi com il le regardoit si volentiers si vit par desus (58*a*) aler . ij . enfans de brance en brance tos nus, et estoient *D. 1* bien cascuns, ce li sambla, de l'age de . vi . [1] ans, et acoloit li uns l'autre, et juoient ensamble. Et quant il les ot assés regardés si les apela, et les conjura del Pere et del Fil et del Saint Esperit que, se il estoient de par Diu, qu'il parlas-

[1] . vii . anz.

sent a lui, et li uns des . ij . [1] enfans s'aresta, et s'asist, et li dist: 'Chevaliers qui nous a conjurés, saces que de par Diu vivons nous, et saces que de cel Paradis terrestre dont Adans fu jetés venimes nous por parler a toi, par le congié del Saint Esperit. Tu es entrés en le queste del Graal, que Bron tes taion a en garde, qu'on apele en mainte contrée le Roi Pescheor, et tu t'en iras ceste voie a destre par devant toi, et saces qu'ançois que tu en isses verras tel cose par quoi tu afineras ton travail se tu es teus que venir i doies.' Et quant Perceval a oie si faite mervelle si pensa un poi, et garda aval, et quant il se regarda si ne vit ne l'arbre, ne les . ij . enfans, ne le crois qu'il avoit devant veüe; si li vint a le gregnor mervelle del monde, et si pensa molt en son cuer, et se pensa et douta que ce ne fust fanthosmes.

Ensi com il estoit en cele pensée qu'il ne savoit que faire, se il iroit le voie que li doi enfant li avoient ensagnie, si vit . j . molt grant ombre par devant lui aler et venir, et passa plus de . iiij . [2] fois en . j . tenant, et li cevaus sor quoi Percevaus seoit s'en commença molt durement a esmaier, et frençoit, et tressaloit. Et quant Perceval le vit si en fu en grant dotance, et fist le signe de le vraie crois sor lui et sor son ceval, et lors issi (58 *b*) de l'ombre une vois, et li dist: [3] 'Perceval, Merlins dont tu as tant oi
b. iii d. parler te fait savoir que tu n'aies mie en despit çou que li doi enfant t'ont ensagnié, car saces que cil ensagnemens vient de par Jesus Christ, Nostre Sauveor, et se tu es preudom saces qu'ançois que tu isses del cemin a destre, que par le volenté Nostre Segnor t'est ensagniés, aras tu

[1] li enfanz respondirent, 'Biaux amis Percevaus.'

[2] plus de . vii . fois.

[3] Voice from cloud speaks in same words as children. There is no mention of Merlin or Joseph.

acomplie la prophesie que Nostre Sire commanda a Joseph.' Quant Percevaus a oïe ceste vois si en fu molt liés, et l'apela par .iij. fois por çou qu'il voloit encore parler a lui, mais il ne li respondi mie. Et quant Percevaus vit qu'il ne parleroit a lui, si s'en torna la voie que li doi enfant li avoient ensagnié, et ala le plainne voie, et saciés que tant que li plainne voie li dura, si erra molt a mesaise, car il amoit miels a aler parmi le forest qu'il ne fesist a le plainne voie.

Ensi com il cevauçoit si s'enbati sor une molt bele praerie, et au cief de cel pré si avoit une molt bele riviere,[1] et molt rices moulins, et cevauça cele part, et vit enmi le riviere .iij. homes en une nef. Lors les aproisma Percevaus, et vit enmi le batel .j. molt viel home gisant sor molt rices dras, et icil preudom estoit li Rois Peschiere ses taions, et[2] huça Perceval et li pria qu'il demorast le nuit od lui, et Percevaus l'en mercia molt, et li Rois Peschiere[3] li dist: *D.* 'Biaus sire chevaliers, vous en irés contremont le riviere, et verrés mon castel la amont aparoir, et je m'en tornerai, ja si m'en irai, car je volrai estre encontre vous.'

(58 *c*) Atant s'en torna Perceval et cevauça selonc le riviere, et regarda amont et aval, ne onques de le maison del Roi[4] Pescheor voi ensagne; et quant il vit qu'il ne le trover si en ot molt grant duel, et mar dist le pescheor qui la l'avoit ensagnié et dist: 'Preudom qui peschoies, maleois soies tu qui m'as gabé, ne fait a entendant cose qui voire ne soit.' Adont cevauça molt dolans et molt pensis, et tant qu'il vit le pumele d'une tor aparoir entre .ij. mons par dejoste le forest u il avoit hui matin

[1] viviere; there is no mention of a river in D., but the F.K. is always met on running water, not on a pond.

[2] et li sires qui ou bastel estoit l'apela. [3] li sires.

[4] Here D. falls into line, and hereafter gives title of 'Roi Pescheor.'

passé, et quant il le vit si en ot molt grant joie, et cevauça cele part, et dont se repenti molt durement de çou qu'il avoit le roi maldit, et ne porquant ne savoit il qui il estoit. Ensi cevauça tant qu'il vint a le forteresce, et vit le riviere qui entour le castel couroit, si riche et si bele com a devise, et les loges de le sale molt bien assises, et quant il le vit si pensa que preudom i conversoit, et miels li sambla estre castiaus a roi qu'a pescheor, et que plus l'aprocha miels li sist, et vint a le porte, si le trova desfermée et le pont abaissié, et vint ens, et descendi au perron devant le sale, et si tost com li vallet de le cort l'aperçurent si s'en corurent encontre lui, et le prisent par son estrier et l'aidierent a desarmer, et enporterent ses armes en mi le sale, et doi vallet en menerent son ceval et l'establerent molt ricement. Et Perceval en monta a mont en le sale, et uns vallès li aporta . j . mantel d'escharlate, et li afubla, et puis l'enmena (58 *d*) seoir en mi le sale en . j . molt rice lit, et lors s'entornerent . iiij . serjant, et s'en vinrent en le cambre la u li Rois Pesciere estoit qui
b. avoit le Graal en garde,[1] et saciés que li Rois Pesciere estoit si viels et frailles et plains de tres grand maladie qu'il ne pooit remuer ne piés ne mains ; et lors demanda as serjans si li cevaliers estoit venus, et il li respondirent : 'Sire, oïl' et dist Bron : 'Je i vuel aler.' Lors li prisent li . iiij . serjans entre lor bras, et l'enporterent en le sale la u Perceval ses niés estoit, et quant il le vit venir si se dreça encontre lui, et li dist : 'Sire, molt me poise que vous estes si grevés de ça venir por moi.' Et li rois respont : 'Je vous volroie molt onerer se estre pooit.' Lors se rasisent sor le lit et parlerent entre aus de plusors coses, et li sire li demanda dont il estoit hui venus et u il avoit

[1] qui pere fu Alein le gros, et aiol Percevaux, et cil Rois Pescheors avoit le digne sanc Jesus Christ en guarde.

geù ; et Perceval li dist : ' Sire, si m'ait Dex je juc anuit en le forest la u jou oi molt pesme ostel, car jou i fui molt a mesaise, et plus me pesa de mon ceval que de moi.' Et li sire respont : ' Vous n'eüstes pas, ce m'est avis, quanques mestier vous fust ;' et lors apela . ij .[1] serjans et lor demanda se il pooient mangier, et il respondirent : ' Oil, par tans,' Atant fisent les tables metre et s'asisent au mangier li sires et Percevaus.

Ensi com il seoient et on lor aportoit le premier mes, si virent d'une cambre issir une demisele molt ricement atirée, et avoit une touaile entor son col, et portoit en ses mains . ij . petis tailleors d'argent. Après vint uns (59 *a*) vallès qui aporta une lance, et sainoit par le fer . iij .[2] gouttes de sanc, et entroient en une cambre par devant *D.* Perceval, et après si vint uns vallès et portoit entre ses mains le vaissel que Nostre Sire donna a Joseph en le prison, et le porta molt hautement entre ses mains ; et quant li sire le vit si l'enclina et rendi se cope, et tot cil de l'ostel autresi. Et quant Percevaus le vit si le tint a molt grant mervelle et l'eüst molt volentiers demandé se il ne cremist son oste anoier, et molt i pensa toute le nuit, mais il li sovint de se[3] mere qui li dist qu'il ne fust mie trop parlans, ne trop demandans des coses, et por tant si s'en tint qu'il ne le demanda, et li sire le metoit en maintes manieres de paroles por çou qu'il l'en demandast, mais il n'en fist rien car il estoit si anoiés des . ij . nuis devant qu'il avoit vellié que por un poi qu'il ne chaoit sor la table.

Atant revint le vallet qui portoit le Graal et rentra dans le cambre u il avoit esté dont il estoit issus, et li vallès qui portoit le lance autresi, et la damoisele les sivi, ne onques Percevaus n'en demanda rien. Quant Brons, li Rois

[1] . iij . [2] une goutte. [3] du prodome qui l'avoit confessé.

Pesciere vit qu'il n'en demanderoit rien si en fu molt dolans, et ensi les faisoit porter a tous les chevaliers qu'il herbergoit por çou que Nostre Sire Jesus Christ li avoit mandé qu'il ne seroit ja garis devant qu'uns chevaliers aroit demandé qui on en servoit, et cel chevalier convenoit estre le mellor del monde, et Perceval meisme le devoit achever, et se il en eüst demandé si fust li rois garis.

(59 *b*) Quant li Rois Pesciere vit que Perceval voloit dormir, si fist le table oster, et fist faire a Perceval . j . molt rice lit, et puis apela . iiij . serjans et dist qu'il s'en iroit dormir et reposer en se cambre, et prist congié a Perceval, et li dist molt qu'il ne li anoiast, car il estoit viels hom, si ne pooit seir longement, et Perceval respondi que si ne faisoit il, et le commanda a Diu, et lors s'en ala en se cambre, et Percevaus remest en le sale et pensa molt au vaissel qu'il avoit veü porter si dignement, et que li sire l'avoit si parfont encliné, et tot cil de l'ostel autresi. Et plus se mervella de le lance qui sannoit par le fer . iij . goutes de
b. 112 d. sanc, et pensa qu'il le demanderoit le matinée as vallès de le cort ançois qu'il s'en voist. Et quant il ot çou pensé molt longement si vinrent . iij . serjant qui li aidierent a descaucier, et le coucierent molt ricement, et quant il fu couciés si estoit molt travelliés, et si dormi dusqu'a la matinée, et quant ce vint a la matinée si se leva, et quant il se fu vestus et atornés si s'en ala aval le maison et aval le cort, mais il n'i vit home ne feme, et revint arriere en le maison et n'i trova nului, et quant il vit çou si en fu molt dolans, et garda par devant lui, si vit ses armes et s'arma, et puis vint al estable, si le trova desfermée, et vit son ceval tot novelement torkiet, et li avoit on mis le frein et le sele, et quant Perceval le vit si s'en mervella molt et lors monta isnelement et issi de l'estable, et garda et vit le porte desfermée, et lors se pensa (59 *c*) que le

vallet estoient alé el bos por cuellir erbe et autre cose dont il eussent mestiers. Et lors se pensa qu'il ira après, et se il en treuve nul il li demandera que cil vaissiaus senefie qu'il vit porter, et por quoi on l'enclinoit si parfondement, et par quel mervelle la lance segnoit par le pointe del fer.

Atant s'en torna et cevauça parmi le forest molt longement et desi a prime, qu'il ne trova hom ne feme a cui il peüst parler. Si en fu molt dolans, et ensi cevauça molt longement et pensa si forment qu'a poi qu'il ne caoit jus del ceval; et tant cevauça qu'il vit une demisele enmi le forest et estoit la plus bele feme qu'on peust mie trover, et ploroit molt tenrement et faisoit molt grant duel; et si tost com ele vit Perceval si s'escria au plus haut qu'ele pot, et dist: 'Perceval[1] li caitis, maléois soies tu quant tu es si maleüreus que biens ne te doit jamais venir, quant *D.* tu as esté a le maison le rice Roi Pescheor ton taion, et as veü le vaissel passer par devant toi, la u li sans Nostre Segnor est, et l'apele on Graal, et as veü par devant toi passer . iij . fois ne onques ne fu teus que tu en demandas. Or saces que Dex te het, et mervelle est que Dex ne te fait morir de le male mort.'[2] Et quant Perceval l'oi si s'en vint cevauçant cele part, et li pria por Diu qu'ele li desist le voir de çou qu'il avoit veü. Et ele li dist: 'Dont ne jeüs tu anuit a le maison Brons ton taion, qui tant est de grant ancisserie, et veis passer le Graal devant (59 *d*) toi, et les autres reliques? Or saces,' fait li demisele, 'que se tu eüsses demandé qu'on en servoit, li rois tes taions fust garis de l'enfermeté qu'il a, et fust revenus en sa santé,[3] et fust acomplie la prophetie que Nostre Sire commanda a Joseph, et eüsses eue la grasse ton taion, et

[1] le Galois.

[2] que terre ne font souz toi.

[3] juvence, cf. *Parzival*, Book xvi.

acomplissement de ton cuer, et eüsses en garde le sanc Jesus Christ. Après te mort fusses en la compagnie de çaus qui ont eü le commandement Jesus Christ; et fussent desfait li encantement et li malice qui or sont en le terre de Bretagne, mais je sais bien por quoi tu l'as perdu.

Saces que tu l'as perdu por çou que tu n'es mie si sages, ne si preus, ne n'as tant fait d'armes, ne de proeces, ne de biens, que tu aies en garde le precieus vaissel.'[1] Et quant Perceval a oi çou que li damisele li avoit conté si s'en esmervella molt, et en ot si grant duel qu'il en commença a larmier, et dist bien que jamais n'arestera si ara trovée le maison son taion, et si ara demandé tout çou que li demisele li avoit amenteü. Atant se departi de le demisele,[2] et le commanda a Diu, et ele lui tot plorant, et Perceval cevauça le voie qu'il cuida que mener le deüst a le maison son taion le Roi Pescheor, mais il s'en estoit malement eslongiés. Et ensi cevauça molt pensis, et cevauça . ij . nuis et . ij . jors qu'onques ne manga se ce ne furent pummes et fruits qu'il trova aval le forest, et pria a Nostre Segnor qu'il le consellast. Et ensi cevauça . j . jor toute jor qu'onques aventure ne trova, et garda devant lui et vit une des plus beles demiseles del monde, et ert dejoste li ataciés uns des plus biaus palefrois (60 *a*) del monde, et par desor le palefrois vit atacie a le brance d'un arbre le teste de son cerf qu'il avoit colpée. Et quant Perceval le vit si en ot molt grant joie, et vint cele part grant aleüre, et le prist, et l'esraça de l'arbre, qu'onques a le demisele n'en parla. Et quant li demisele le voit si l'escria molt ireement, et li dist: 'Chevaliers, metés jus le

[1] et sachiés que tu viendras encore, et demanderas du Graal, et quant en auras demandé si sera ton aiol gari.

[2] et il ne pot rasener a la maison son aiol et chevaucha tant qu'il vint en la grant forest

teste mon segnor, car saciés se vous l'enportés il vous en avenra hontes.' Quant Perceval l'oi si commenca a rire, et li dist: 'Demisele, je ne le metrai mie jus por cose que je voie encore, ançois le rendrai a celi cui je l'ai en couvent.' *D.*

Ensi com il parloit a celi, si vit venir une bisse molt esfreée, et son braket après qui le sivi molt vistement et le tenoit parmi les cuisses, et le bisse avoit tel paor qu'ele vint a Perceval et a le demisele a merci. Et quant Percevaus vit son braket si en fu molt liés, et le prist desor son ceval, et l'aplanoia molt debuenairement; et ensi com il le tenoit si vit venir le chevalier qui tolu li avoit, et si tost com il vit Perceval si en ot molt grant duel, et s'escria hautement: 'Par Diu! falis chevaliers mar i avés mon braket retenu.' Et quant Perceval l'a oï si li tint a grant folie, et li dit: 'Vous estes fols qui a vous le traiés, car vous le m'emblastes mauvaisement.' Quant li cevaliers l'oi si le desfia, et Percevaus lui ensement. Lors s'eslonga li uns de l'autre, et esporonoient par tel air que tos li boschages en resona, et s'entreferirent si durement qu'il ni ot celui ne covenist voler a le terre. Lors resalirent sus molt vistement, et sacierent les espées par molt grant air, et caplerent molt longement des le midi (60 *b*) dusqu'a none; et saciés que Perceval fu molt atains, et li chevaliers autresi, et tant que Perceval se resvertua et ot honte en lui meisme de çou que li chevaliers duroit si longement, et hauça l'espée, et feri le chevalier parmi l'escu, si qu'il li fendi parmi le boucle en . ij . moitiés, et li cols fu molt ruistes et grans, et li espée avala sor le hiaume, et ne pot entamer l'acier, et vint avalant de grant vertu qu'il li trença plus de . c . mailles del hauberc, et li trença l'esporon par mi, et feri l'espée . ij . piés en terre.[1]

[1] Fight much more briefly told in D.

Quant li chevaliers vit le colp que Perceval avoit doné si grant si en ot grant paor, et vit bien que si il l'en donoit .j. autre colp qu'il l'ociroit, si se traist arriere, et li cria por Diu merci, qu'il ne l'ocesist por cose qu'il eüst faite. Et Perceval li dist: 'Dont me di por quoi tu enportas mon braket, et qui li chevaliers estoit a cui je me com-
d. batoie quant tu le me tolsis, et se tu counois le vielle qui le tombel m'ensagna.' Et li chevaliers respont: 'Tout ce te dirai je bien.' Et Perceval li respont: 'Se tu le me dis tu n'auras garde de mort.'

Lors li respondi li chevaliers: 'Saces que cil qui issi del tombel que ce estoit mes frere germains, et estoit uns des mellors chevaliers qu'on pooit trover, et tant qu'une fée[1] qui molt estoit bele l'enama por le proece qu'ele vit en lui, et si tost comme mes frere l'ot veüe si fu si sospris de s'amor qu'a poi qu'il n'issi del sens toutes les fois qu'il estoit avuec li; et tant que li demisele li dist qu'il avuec li s'en alast la u ele le volroit mener; et il dist qu'il iroit tot la u ele le volroit mener par couvens qu'ele le menast (60 *c*) en tel liu qu'il ne perdist sa cevalerie. Et ele li dist qu'ele le menroit en tel liu u il poroit tant faire d'armes que nus plus, car tout li cevalier de le cort Artu repairoient la ou ele le menroit. Lors l'enmena en cele forest, et quant il i furent venu si troverent joste le cemin que tu veïs quant tu trespassas au tombel une des plus beles praeries del monde, si i descendirent entre aus .ij., et misent lor napes, et mangierent par molt grant delit, et quant il orent mangié mes frere se couça dormir, et quant il ot dormi tant com lui plot si s'esvella, et quant il se fu esvelliés si se trova en .j. des plus biaus castiaus del monde, et vit dedens chevaliers et dames et demiseles tout aparelliés de lui servir; et cil castiaus seeit dejoste le tombel

[1] une damoiselle.

mais nus ne le puet veir, et de laiens issi le chevaliers *D. 114 a.*
quant il vint combatre a toi. Et li vielle qui le tombel t'ensagna saces qu'ele est, quant ele vuelt, li plus bele demisele que tu onques veis, et si est cele meisme qui le tombel estora, et qui mon frere amena en le forest. Or saces que je ai voir dit de çou que je t'ai conté.' Quant Perceval l'oi si en fu molt liés, et li dist: 'Par Diu, tu m'as contée la forçor mervelle qu'onques mais oisse!' Et lors li demanda Perceval se il li sauroit ensagnier le maison au rice Roi Pescheor, et li cevaliers li respont: 'Par Diu je n'en sai mie, ne onques n'oi parler de chevalier qui le trovast, et si ai molt veu de çaus qui le querroient.'

Dont li demanda Perceval se il li saroit a dire qui li demisele estoit (60 *d*) qui son braket li avoit baillié, et li chevaliers respont qu'il le counissoit molt bien: 'Saces qu'ele est suers a le demisele qui mes frere aimme, et por çou te carja ele son braket qu'ele sot bien que se suer t'enmenroit a son ami por combatre, et saces que li demisele qui le braket te carja het molt durement se seror, por son ami, por çou qu'il ne soloit passer cevaliers a cui il ne fesist honte, et li demisele qui le braket te carja seut bien que teus chevaliers i venroit qui en vengeroit tous les autres.'

Lors li demanda Perceval s'il avoit[1] loing desci au castel a le demisele, et cil li dist: 'Se tu tiens cest cemin qui si *D. 114 b.*
s'en va a senestre[2] tu i venras ains le nuit.' Et quant Perceval l'oi si en fu molt liés, et s'en torna atant, mais il li fist ançois fiencier qu'il se metroit en le prison le rice roi Artu, et cil li otroia a faire se volenté. Ensi s'en torna li chevaliers, et vint en le cort au roi Artu, et se rendi en se prison de par Perceval le Galois, et li rois le retint

[1] s'il avoit oncques au chastel a la demeisele esté Knight tells him way. M is apparently correct. [2] destre.

volentiers, et li clama se prison cuite. Et Percevaus, puis qu'il se fu partis del chevalier, si cevauça grant aleüre tant qu'il vint au castel u li demisele manoit qui son braket li avoit cargié. Et si tost com li demisele qui estoit as fenestres de le tor le vit venir, si descendi encontre lui, et bien vegna molt, et le reçut molt liement, et l'apela, et li dist: 'Dans chevaliers, saciés que por un poi que je ne me sui molt coreciés a vous, et saciés que por grant cose n'en eüsse jo tant esté senuec se je le peüsse avoir esmieldré.' Et Perceval li respondi: 'Demisele, saciés que je n'en peuc mais, et saciés qu'el demorer ot molt grant oqoison.' Lors li conta s'aventure (61 *a*) de cief en cief si com ele fu alée, de le vielle qui son braket li avoit tolu, et del tombel com ele li ensagna, et comment li chevaliers se combati a lui, et comment il le mata, et comment il se referi en son arcuel desos le tombel, et comment li chevaliers en avoit porté son braket, et comment il l'avoit quis car il ne voloit mie revenir senuec. Et li conta comment il l'avoit trové el bos, et comment il le conquist par armes, et li conta de cief en cief si com il li estoit avenu, et toute le painne qu'il avoit eüe puis qu'il se fu departis de li. Et quant li demisele l'oi si en fu molt lie, et li pardouna molt buenement. Lors le fist le demisele desarmer, et l'enmena avuec li, et li fist le plus bel samblant qu'ele pot, et li dist: 'Puis que vous avés celui conquis que je molt haoie qui ert amis a me seror, je vuel des or mais estre a vostre commandement, et serés sire de cest castel, et vuel que vous demourés tos jors avuec moi.' Mais quant Perceval l'oi si en fu molt dolans, et s'en escusa au plus bel qu'il pot, car il n'i avoit talent de demorer.

). 114 c.

Si li dist: 'Demisele, saciés que de le vostre volenté ne me vuel je pas partir, que je ne face del tout a vostre volenté de quanques vous me demanderés par raison, mais

saciés que jou ai .j. afaire en le cort le rice roi Artu que je jamais ne girai qu'une nuit en .j. ostel desci a tant que jou arai asomé, et sor vous le metrai tout.' A cel tans estoit costume que qui enfragnoit son veu qu'il amast miels qu'on li trençast le teste. Et quant li demisele l'oi si respondi: 'Sire qui de vostre veu vous feroit partir (61 *b*) saciés qu'il ne vous ameroit gaires, ne sor çou que vous m'avés dit ne vous oseroie jou esforcier ne proiere faire; mais tant vuel jou, se Dex vous lait esploitier le vostre besogne, que vous revenés proçainnement a moi.' Et Perceval respondi: 'Demisele, saciés que a çou ne couvient il mie proiere, que je ne desir tant rien, se Dex me laist esploitier me besogne, que d'estre avuec vous a loisir.' Atant prist congié Perceval a le demisele, et demanda ses armes, et quant li demisele l'oi si li demanda: 'Sire, por Diu qu'est çou que volés faire, dont ne demoerrés vous anuit avuec moi?' Et il li respont: 'Dame ce ne poroit estre, car mon veu aroie trespassé, car jou i ai autre fois jeu.' Quant li demisele l'oi si en fu molt dolante, et vit bien qu'ele n'en poroit el faire, si le commanda a Diu tot plorant, car molt ama miels se demourée que son aler. Mais Perceval n'avoit cure de faire pecié, et Nostre Sire ne li voloit soufrir a faire. Atant s'en parti de li, et puis qu'il fu mis a la voie si cevauça grant aleüre, et jut le nuit en le forest, et saciés qu'il cevauça puis .vij. ans par les pais et par les forès, querant aven- *D.*
tures, et saciés qu'il onques aventure ne cevalerie ne mervelle ne trova qu'il n'akievast. Et en ces .vij. ans envoia plus de .c. prisons a le cort le rice roi Artu, et saciés que ces mervelles qu'il trova, et de çou qu'il vit, et qu'il ne pot trover le maison son taion le rice Roi Pescheor, devint il si dervés et si fors del sens, et si en (61 *c*) perdi son memoire, que en ces .vij. ans ne li sovint onques de

Diu, n'en Sainte Yglise ne en mostier, n'entra. Et tant qu'il cevauçoit le jor de le Crois aorée que, Nostre Sire sofri mort por peçeors, et estoit tos armés si com por soi desfendre et por autrui damagier se il l'encontrast, lors encontra dames[1] et chevaliers tos embronciés en lor capes et en lor caperons, et aloient par orisons por lor peciés acorder vers Jesus Christ. Lors s'aresterent et li demanderent quel fors eürs le demenoit que, le jor que Nostre Sire estoit travelliés en le crois, s'estoit armés por hom ocire, ne por aventure trover? Et quant Perceval les oï de Diu parler et ramembrer, si se reconut, et revint en son sens par le volenté Jesus Christ, et se repenti molt de sa folie qu'il avoit si longement menée, et se desarma errant, et se dist li contes[2] qu'ensi com Dex volt asena a le maison le sien oncle l'ermite, la u se suer l'avoit mené confesser, et se confessa a lui, et prist penitance tele com il li encarja
a. et demoura avuec lui . ij . mois.[3] [4]

Mais[5] de çou ne parole pas Crestiens de Troies, ne li autre trovéor qui en ont trové por faire lor rimes plaisans, mais nous n'en disons fors tant com au conte en monte, et que Merlins en fist escrire a Blayse son maistre qui en Nortumbellande manoit, et estoit si viels que a poi qu'il se pooit soutenir, et veoit et savoit les aventures que a Perceval (61 *d*) avenoient cascun jor, et les faisoit escrire Blayse, por ramembrer as preudommes qui volentiers l'oroient. Or saciés que nous trovons en l'escrit que Blayses nous raconte, si com Merlins li fist escrire et metre

[1] . j . chevalier et dames. [2] li livres. [3] ij . jors et . ij . nuis.
[4] Here D. inserts news of death of sister.
[5] mais de ce ne palloient mie ne ne cressoient li troveor qui en ont trové por faire lor rimes plesanz. Does this refer to the news of sister's death?—in that case D. has placed the allusion rightly—or to Perceval's remaining *two months* with his uncle?

en auctorité, que Perceval demoura a le maison son oncle . ij . mois, et saciés que a cel point que Perceval i vint que se suer estoit morte et trespassée de cest siecle, et dist Perceval : 'Sire, jou irai veoir me seror car je l'aim molt de buene amor.' Et quant li ermite l'oi si commença a plorer, et li dist, 'Biaus niés, vous ne le verrés jamais, car saciés qu'ele est morte passé a un an et demi, et quant je seuc qu'ele estoit morte si en fui molt dolans, et i alai, et l'en fis aporter en mon edefi et l'enfoi la defors me maison.'

Quant Peicevaus entendi que se suer estoit trespassée de cest siecle si en fu molt dolans, et qui li dounast tot l'or del monde ne se tenist il qu'il se larmiast des uels, et dist a son oncle: 'Sire, por Diu menés me veoir le tombe me seror qui tant m'amoit.' Et li preudom respondi : 'Volentiers.' Lors le mena tot droit a le tombe la u la damoisele estoit enfoie, et quant Perceval le vit si commença a plorer, et lors disent orisons por l'ame de li, et quant il orent proié Nostre Segnor por l'ame, si li dist l'ermites : 'Biaus niés, dont n'irés vous veoir le vostre repair, qui fu Alain le Gros vostre pere et le mien frere? Saciés qu'il seroit tot a vostre commandement.' Quant Perceval l'oi, si li dist : 'Sire, (62*a*) si m'ait Dex je n'iroie pas, qui me donroit le roiaume au rice roi Artu, car trop aroie grant duel se je veoie le maison mon pere si vuidie de mes amis, que je n'i trouveroie ame qui m'apartenist.' Et li preudom li dist : 'Biaus niés, ce ne feriés mon.' Lors li dist Percevaus : 'Biaus oncles, je m'en irai a vostre congié, et saciés que je jamais n'aresterai si arai trovée le maison mon taion le vostre pere.' Quant li ermites l'oi si li dist: 'Biaus niés, Damediu Jesus Christ vous i laist assener ; et saciés que jou en proierai molt Nostre Segnor.'

Atant s'en departi, et prist congié, et cevauça tant parmi le forest que ce vint al[1] vuitime jor de le Pentecoste, et lors cevauça tot . j . jor desci a none, qu'il onques aventure ne trova, et tant cevauça qu'il garda devant lui, et vit vallès cevaucier desci a . iiij .[2] et portoit cascuns . j . escu a son col, et menoient somiers et cevaus en destre, et faisoient après aus traire une caretée de lances. Et si tost com Percevaus les vit si hurta des esporons après aus, et lor demanda quel part il menroient cel harnas, et a cui il estoient? Et cil li respondirent: 'Biaus sire, nous somes a Melian de Lis, et alons au tornoi qui doit seir au Blanc castel, a une des plus beles demiseles del monde; si dient bien tot cil qui l'ont veüe que se toutes les biautés de celes del monde estoient toutes assamblées a une, si n'ataindroient rien a cele demisele. Et avuec çou qu'ele a grant biauté si a ele grant riquoise, et si l'ont plusor chevalier demandée, et conte, et duc, et autre segnor, mais ele n'en volt onques a nul entendre. Or si saciés que li dame del Blanc castel (62 *b*) fait crier . j . tornoi par devant se fille, qui molt est cortoise, par . j . tel covent qui mis i est, que cil qui le tornoi pora vaincre ara le demisele, ja si povres bacelers ne sera, car ele le fera rice home, et metra a son commandement li et quanqu'ele a. Or si saciés que qui Dex otroiera l'eür que ce sera li plus rices hom del monde, et li plus aaisiés qui or soit en le terre de Bretagne, fors seulement le roi Artu; et por çou i va mesire Meliandelis car il l'a molt lonc tans amée, et volroit si esploitier, se il venoit au desus del tornoi, qu'il eüst le demisele a feme.' Et lors lor demanda Percevaus quant il cuidoient que le tornois deüst estre. Et il respondent: 'Biaus sire, il sera,

[1] au jor que Percevaux se departi de son oncle—il estoit le . viij . jor de Pentecoste. (Describes beauty of the forest, song of the birds, etc.)

[2] . vij .

d'ui en . iij . jors.' Et lors lor demanda Perceval s'il i aroit plenté de chevaliers? Et quant li vallès l'oi si s'en rist et dist: 'Sire cevaliers, ce ne fist mie a demander, car li tornois fu criés a le cort le rice roi Artu, si sai bien qu'il i venront tot le chevalier de le table reonde, car il sont revenu a ceste Pentecoste de le queste del Graal, u il n'ont rien esploitié, et li rois Artus si tint a ceste Pentecoste la forçor feste qu'il onques mais tenist; a cele feste fu criés li tornois, et bien saciés qu'il en i venront de se cort plus de .v. m., et bien sai que Mesire Gavains[1] i venra, et Lanselos del Lac, et Kex li senescaus et Bedivers, et Mordrès, et Guirrès, et cil . iij . sont frere mon segneur Gavains. Et saciés que Kex li senescaus se vanta, voiant tous les barons, qu'il l'en amenroit a le cort Artu, et le conqueroit d'armes, si en risent molt li chevalier et li atornerent a grant folie et meisme li rois (62 *c*) Artus l'en blasma molt forment, et l'en gaba plusors fois, et dist bien li rois Artus que, se Perceval ooit noveles del tornoi qu'il i fust, il ne troveroit ja home qui peust durer contre lui, car il a envoiés plus de . c . et . l . chevaliers prisons a le cort Artu. Or si est li rois molt dolans de çou qu'il n'a esté a se cort, et cuide bien qu'il soit mors.

'Or saciés que nous vous avons dit verité de çou que tu nous as demandé, mais or nous dites se vous i venrés avuec nous?' Et quant Perceval l'oi si lor dist qu'il n'iroit ore mie; et cil li respondi: 'Ausi m'ait Dex, vous avés droit,[2] que vous i esploiteriés molt petit de le vostre besogne.' Atant se departirent li vallet de Perceval, et *D.*

[1] G. et Guivrez, et Galerot, et Key le seneschal, et Bedvers, Lancelot, et Sagremors, et revex (sic) se venta, etc. (Probably original text gave G.; Gurnes, Garnet, Mordres, ces . iij . estoient freres mesire G)

[2] quar il en i aura assez sans vus, etc.

cevaucierent lor cemin, et Percevaus s'arouta de l'autre part, et pensa qu'il se trairai vers le tornoi, et cevauça toute s'ambleure petite desci au vespre, et garda devant lui sor le cemin, et vit le maison a[1] . j . vavassor, et estoit entor fermée de mur. Et quant Percevaus le vit si en fu molt liés, et cevauça grant aleure desci au castel, et trova le segnor seant sor le pont, et . vj . vallès avuec lui, et regardoient çaus qui la passoient qui aloient au tornoi. Et si tost come li sire vit venir Perceval si sali encontre lui, et le bien vegna molt liement, et li presenta molt volentiers son ostel. Et Perceval qui molt en fu liés l'en mercia molt, et descendi maintenant, et li vallet au segnor s'atent, et li aidierent a desarmer, et emmena li uns son ceval en l'estable et l'aaisa au miels qu'il pot, et li autre enporterent ses armes en une cambre, et il demoura em pur le cors, et saciés (62 *d*) que li sire le regarda molt volentiers, car il estoit li plus biaus chevaliers del monde, et dist entre ses dens, que Perceval ne l'entendi mie: 'Molt est grans damages se si biaus chevaliers n'a proece en lui!'

Atant vinrent . ij . vallet qui li afublerent j . mantel,[2] et il s'asist joste le segnor, et regardoient les chevaliers, et le harnas qu'illuec passoit. Et Perceval demanda le segnor se il avoit lonc desci au Blanc castel? Et li sire respont: 'Saciés que vous i venrés le matin ains prime.' Et lors dist Perceval: 'A i auques passés de chevaliers hui por aler au tornoi?' Et li sire respont: 'Un poi ançois que vous venissiés estoient passé cil de la cort Artu,[3] et saciés qu'en le route avoit plus de . v . c . chevaliers; et si vous di qu'il amenoient le plus rice harnas que nus hom

[1] qu'il vint a . j . blanc chastel.

[2] d'escarlate cort.

[3] Gawen et Key le seneschal, et Mordret et tuit cil de la cort au rois Artus.

peüst veir.' Et quant Perceval l'oi si en fu molt liés, et sisent la dusqu'a le nuit, et li sire demanda as serjans se on poroit a piece mangier, et il respondirent: 'Oïl, par tans.' Atant s'en monta li sire en le sale, et tint Perceval par le main, et l'onera molt durement, et commanda que les tables fussent mises, et on si fist puis qu'il l'ot commandé. Et quant la table fu mise si issi le feme au seigneur de le cambre, et amena avuec li ses · ij · filles,[1] qui molt erent beles demiseles, et sages, et cortoises; et quant eles virent Perceval si l'onorent molt, et les fist seir a le table joste Perceval, et saciés que Perceval fu molt *D* regardés le nuit de le dame et de ses filles, et dient bien qu'onques mais si bel chevalier n'avoient veu. Après mangier fist on le table oster, et li sire demanda Perceval se il estoit venus por aler au tornoi, et Perceval dit: 'Je le seuc yer primes, par les vallès Meliandelis.' Et li sire (63 *a*) respont: 'Çou est il meisme qui a pris le tornoi, et demain en doivent les vespres seoir, et se jou osoie je vous en prieroie que vous i venissiés od moi.' Et Perceval li a respondu et li dist: 'Biaus ostes, saciés que jou irai molt volentiers por amor de vous, mais je ne m'i armeroie demain a nul fuer.' Et li sire respont: 'Contre votre volenté ne vous en proieroi je mie.'

Atant furent li lit aparellié, et . iiij . vallet enmenerent Perceval molt ricement coucier desci a lendemain au jor que li vallet se leverent par le cort. Et quant Perceval vit le jor si se leva, et li sire de l'ostel estoit ja levés, et alerent oir messe a une capele molt rice. Et quant le messe fu cantée si revinrent en le sale, et mangierent par grant *D.* delit. Et quant il orent mangié si s'en vint le sire aval en le cort et commanda que li ceval fussent aparellié, et fist metre en un somier les armes Perceval, et montérent tan-

[1] la fille.

tost, et alerent veir le tornoi, qui molt estoit pris par grant aramie, ne il ne porent onques si tost venir que les ensagnes ne fussent fors issues as cans, et la peussiés veoir tant bel escu, et tant bel ceval, et tante rice armeure, et tante rice ensagne de soie, ne onques puis le tans Artu ne fu tornois pris u il eust tante rice armeure, ne tant buen[s] chevaliers. Et saciés que Meliandelis estoit issus as cans molt ricement armés, et avoit .j. escu d'or a .ij. lions, molt ricement painturé, et avoit entor son brac le mance a le demisele del castel, et cevauçoit molt orguelleusement, et avoit en se compagne .l. chevaliers molt ricement aparelliés, et li hiralt (63 *b*) s'escrierent: 'As hiaumes,' car il i ot molt grant aatie faite, et trambloient li cuer as coars, et saciés que vous onques ne veistes tornoi assambler par si grant aramie, car saciés que Meliandelis s'eslaissa tos premiers en mi le campagne devant tos ses compagnons, plus qu'uns ars ne traisist, car il volroit faire cevalerie qu'a s'amie pleüst. Et tant tost com mesire Gavains le vit, si adreça encontre lui, et s'entrevinrent plus tost qu'esmerellons ne aronde ne volast; et s'entreferirent des lances es escus a or molt aigrement, si que li escus froissierent et quasserent, et lor lances aresterent as haubers, et volerent li tronçon encontre mont, et s'entrepasserent outre molt orguelleusement qu'onques li uns ne li autres n'i perdi estrier.

Atant s'asamblerent les compagnes molt vistement, et
2. 116 d. s'entrealerent ferir parmi escus et parmi haubers,[1] et quant les lances furent froissies si salirent as espées, et la veissiés le plus aigre tornoi qu'onques nus hom ne peüst veir, et la veissiés en plus de .v.c. lius les banieres corre l'une desor l'autre, et saciés que Meliandelis i josta molt sovent, et gagna cevaus, et les envoia en le ville a le demisele qui molt en ot grant joie. Et saciés que au mur del blanc

[1] heaumes.

castel avoit plus de .ccc. dames et demiseles qui les regardoient, et mostroient li une a l'autre les plus proisiés d'armes, et cil del tornoi s'en esforçoient molt durement, et saciés que Mesire Gavains, et Lanselos,[1] et cil de le table reonde faisoient tos les rens ploier, et n'encontroient (63 *c*) qu'il ne portassent a terre; et Meliandelis de l'autre part et si chevaliers i faisoient mervelles d'armes, et dura li tornois dus'qu'a le nuit qu'il se departi, et saciés que Mesire Gavains, et Yvains,[2] et Lanselos, et Kex li senescaus l'avoient tout molt bien fait, et Meliandelis de l'autre part, si que celes del castel n'en savoient auquels doner le prix, et disent qu'il l'avoient tout si bien fait *D. 117 a.* qu'eles non savoient a eslire le mellor. Mais li demisele dist que Meliandelis l'avoit le miels fait. Et saciés que le dame del Blanc castel, qui mere estoit a le demisele, ne s'i acordoit mie, ains s'en atornerent li plus d'eles a Gavain, si en demenoient molt grant estrif, et li demisele respondi: 'Demain porons savoir li quels est mieldres, et li quels en ara le pis.'

Tot ensi remest la parole, et Meliandelis s'en entra el castel, et Mesire Gavains autresi, et Lanselos, et Kex li senescaus, et cil de le table reonde, et bien saciés qu'onques mais au tornoi ne vit on tant bel ostel. Et quant li tornois del vespre si departi si s'en torna li vavassere et Percevaus, et s'en revinrent au castel qui n'estoit mie lonc d'illuec, et si tost com il furent descendu si issirent li vallet contre aus, et menerent lor cevaus es estables, et les establerent molt ricement. Et li sire et Perceval s'entreprisent par les mains, et en monterent en le sale, et commanda li sire le table a metre, et il si firent, et s'asisent[3] au mangier, et lors

[1] e Bedvers.

[2] Gavains, Lanselot, et Bedvers (D. retains this trio throughout).

[3] et sa fame, et Perceval, et la fille au prodome.

commença li sire a parler del tornoi, et si demanda (63 *d*) li sires a Perceval li quels avoit miels fait a son essiant, et lors respondi Perceval que cil a l'escu d'or et as . ij . lions s'i avoit molt bien contenu com chevaliers, et[1] cil a l'escu blanc ravoit le miels fait, et li sire respont et dist : 'Saciés que cil a l'escu d'or et as . ij . lions estoit Meliandelis, et cil a l'escu blanc, çou estoit li niés le roi Artu, et avoit
b. nom Gavains.' Et Perceval li respont et dist : 'Saciés que por autretant d'or comme cis castiaus est grans ne lairoie jou que je n'i soie demain armés, et josterai a mon pooir, et si volroie, si m'ait Dex, que Gavains et Meliandelis se tornassent d'une part, et si josteroie contre aus.'

Quant li sire et ses filles l'oirent si fisent molt grant joie, et li dist li sire : 'Saciés que por l'amor de vous m'armerai, et serai demain avuec vous.' Quant Perceval l'entent si en fu molt liés, et l'en mercia molt. Ensi le laissierent, et tant que li eure vint qu'il fu tans d'aler gesir, et dormirent desi a le matinée, que Perceval et li sire se leva, et oirent le messe a le capele, et quant il orent le messe oie si vinrent en le sale, et se desjunerent de pain et de vin, et lors vint l'ainsnée des filles al segnor et li dist que por l'amor de li portast se mance avuec lui au tornoi ; et quant Perceval le vit si en fu molt liés, et dist que por amor de li volra faire plus d'armes qu'il onques fesist a nul jor, et quant li sire l'a oi si en a molt grant joie. Atant monterent li vallet et menerent le harnas devant aus, et atant monterent li sires et Perceval, et cevauçerent (64 *a*) desci au castel ; et saciés que quant il vinrent as osteus si s'armoient li chevaliers par le castel, et estoient monté li chevaliers plusor sor lor cevaus, et garderent li chevaliers, si virent ja les dames et les demiseles montées as murs, et quant Perceval vit qu'il s'armoient ja tuit, si demanda ses armes, et s'arma molt

[1] et d'autre part.

ricement d'unes molt rices armes que li vavassere li avoit *D.*
prestées, car il ne se voloit pas des soies armer por çou
qu'on ne le recouneust, et saciés que Meliandelis avoit esté
le nuit a l'ostel monsignor Gavains, et s'estoient molt
malement ahati de foler çaus defors, si que les damoiseles
del castel l'en blasmoient molt durement por çou qu'il
avoit le nuit esté contre mon segnor Gavain. Mais saciés
que le demisele del castel les escusa au miels qu'ele pot,
car ele dist qu'a çaus defors estoient creues . iij . banieres,
puis ce dist si en au[r]oient cil dedens le pior, se Meliandelis[1]
ne lor aidoit. Et quant cil defors l'oirent si en orent molt
grant duel, mais Saigremors dist que ja por çou ne laira
a assambler. Et quant Perceval en oi le novele si en fu
molt liés, et dist a vavassor: 'miels lor venist qu'il se fussent
tenu par defors.' Atant issirent li tornoi fors de le vile, et
s'arengiérent molt belement li un d'encoste l'autre, et li
garçon, et li hiralt si tost com il fusent ordené escrierent
'As hiaumes!' Et si tost com il se furent escrié si veissiés
destendre d'une part et d'autre, et saciés qu'il fu molt liés
qui le plus isnel ceval i ot. Et Meliandelis vint devant
(64 *b*) tous les autres eslaissiés, et si tost com Perceval le vit
si en ot molt grant joie et laissa corre encontre lui par
grant air, et avoit entor son brac le mance a le demisele. *D.*
Et quant les demiseles del mur le virent si dirent toutes
ensamble: 'Or poés veir le plus bel chevalier que vous
onques mais veistes.' Or saciés qu'il vinrent de la forçor
aleüre qu'onques ceval porent rendre, et froissierent lor
lances parmi lor escus, si que li tronçon en volerent
encontre mont. Et Perceval, qui molt ot pooir et harde-
ment, l'encontra si angoisseusement del pis et del cors et
del hiaume, qu'il le fist voler si malasivement a le terre
qu'a poi que li cols ne li fu rompus, et li froissa le brac

[1] G.

destre en . ij . moitiés, et il se pasma de l'angoisse plus de . xiiij . [1] fois, et saciés que de cel poindre que Perceval fist quant il l'ot outré encontra Keu le senescal, et le hurta si angoisseusement qu'il ne sot se il fu jors u nuis, et le porta de ceval tot estendu a le terre.

Quant cil defors virent le cevalerie si bele que Perceval avoit faite si hurterent tot ensamble après lui des esporons, et mesire Gavains et Lanselos revinrent encontre aus, et
D. 118 a. s'entrecontrerent les banieres si angoisseusement qu'il fisent toute le terre hocier, et saciés que Saigremor li desreés, qui avuec çaus defors se tenoit, i josta molt durement, et i fist le jor tant d'armes que cil qui le virent le loerent, et li atornerent a grant bien. Et Lanselos et Mesire Gavains, i referoient molt ruistement et faisoient molt forment les rens ploier devant aus, mais saciés que sor tous (64 *c*) autres chevaliers le fist bien Perceval, car il n'encontra chevalier qu'il ne portast et lui et le ceval a terre, et si que celes qui estoient au mur disoient que molt avoit cele bien emploiée se mance qui cargie li avoit, car molt devroit grant joie avoir cui il devroit amer car il n'encontra chevalier qu'il n'envoit a terre tot plat.

Ensi disoient les demiseles de le tor u eles estoient, et quant Mesire Gavains vit Perceval si en fu molt dolans qu'ensi si grant li damagoit, et prist une lance qu'uns siens vallès li bailla, et s'en vint vers Perceval grant aleure. Et quant Perceval le vit si le douta molt petit au samblant qu'il en fist, et neporquant se savoit il monsegnor Gavains a molt preudome, et s'entreferirent molt ruistement es escus que les lances peçoierent et volerent encontre mont li tronçon, et s'entrehurterent au passer molt malasivement. Au passer que mesire Gavains fist si l'en avint molt male-

[1] , iij ,

ment car ses cevaus et il vola en mi le pré, et au ceval rompi li cols et morut. *D.*

Adont se desconfirent cil dedens et tornerent les dos, et quant Mesire Gavains vit que ses gens s'en fuioient si en fu molt dolans, et sali en piés, et traist l'espée. Atant es .j. chevaliers qui li escria: 'Por Diu dans chevaliers vous demourés devers nous:' Atant s'eslaissa a lui, et li volt le hiaume esracier de le teste. Quant Gavains le vit si en ot molt grant engagne et s'aproça de lui, et hauça l'espée, et le feri si durement qu'il le fendi desci es dens, et l'abati a terre, et prist le ceval et i monta (64 *d*), et poinst après ses gens, et ainçois qu'il i venist abati .iiij. cevaliers devant lui, et ses gens se flatirent en le vile, et cil defors les encaucierent desci as portes, et prisent assés harnas, et gaagnierent cevaus, et prisent prisons; et si tost com li descomfiture fu faite, Perceval vint a son oste, et li presenta .iij. des mellors cevaus qu'il avoit gaagniés, et voloit que se fille les eüst por se mance qu'il avoit portée, et li sire l'en merçia molt. Atant dist Perceval: 'Sire alons ent, car je volrai encor a nuit gesir a votre ostel'[1] Si com il s'estoient arouté li sires et Perceval et li vallet, si virent devant lui .j. home venir viel et barbu, et estoit bien vestus, et portoit une fauc a son col, et bien sambloit faucheors,[2] et vint encontre aus, et prist Perceval par le frain, et li dist: 'Musart, tu es fols, et pas ne deusses aler a tornoi.' Et quant Perceval l'oi si s'en mervella molt,[3] et li demanda: 'Viellars, qu'en gist il sor vous?'

[1] The host asks P. if he will not go to the castle and claim the hand of the maiden. P. explains he has no desire or intention of taking a wife.

[2] et avoit uns grans solers chauciez,

[3] et en ot honte por son hoste,

Et li preudom respondi:[1] 'Si fait, et a moi, et a autrui en monte il, car saces qu'il en monte sor toi et sor moi, et bien te di que sor moi en monte plus que sor autrui.' Et quant Perceval l'oi si s'en mervella molt durement, et li demanda: 'Qui es tu?' Et li hom respondi: 'Je sui fius a .j. home que tu counois mauvaisement, et il te counoist miels que tu lui, et saces que de sa counissance ne puet a nului biens venir, et dolans puet estre qu'il counoist.' Quant Perceval entendi çou que cil li disoit si s'en mervella molt, et dist: 'Diroies tu me rien de ton afaire se je descendoie?' Et li preudom respont: 'Je te diroie tel cose que je ne diroie mie devant le gent.'
c. (65 *a*) Quant Perceval l'oi si en fu molt liés, et dist a son oste: 'Biaus sire, alés vous ent, et m'atendés al ostel, et je parlerai a cest preudome, et puis vous sivrai.' Et li ostes respondi: 'Sire, volentiers.' Atant s'en torna li vavasseres, et Perceval demoura, et s'en vint au preudom, et li demanda qu'il estoit, et cil li respondi: 'Je suis uns faukiere, ce poés veoir.' Et Perceval li respondi: 'Qui t'a dont dit tant de mon afaire?' Et li preudom li a respondu: 'Ançois que tu fusses nés seuc je ton nom.' Et quant Perceval l'oi si s'en mervella molt, et li dist: 'Je conjur de par Diu que tu me dies de mon estre et de ton affaire, et si t'en conjur de par Diu que tu le me dies.' Et cil li a respondu: 'Je ne t'en mentirai ja. Saces que je suis apelés Merlins, et sui venus de Nortumbellande por parler a toi.' Et quant Perceval l'oi si s'en mervella molt, et li dist, 'Por Diu, Merlin, jou ai molt oi parler de toi, et que tu es molt buens devins, mais por Diu di moi comment je porai trover le maison le rice Roi Pescheor?' Et Merlins li a respondu, 'Je t'en dirai buenes ensagnes, saces que Dex t'a nuisi par

[1] 'si fait, grant partie de ton afaire gist sor moi'—(all this conversation is much compressed and very confused in D.).

ton voe que tu as trespassé, et saces que tu avoies voé que tu ne giroies en . j . ostel qu'une nuit, et tu a geü . ij . nuis a le maison le vavasseur, la u tu voloies ore aler encore gesir.' Et Perceval li a respondu: 'Je ne m'en estoie garde donée.' Et Merlins li dist: 'Dont t'est il plus legier a pardouner. Or t'avoiera[i] a le maison ton taion, si que tu i venras ains un an.' Et quant Perceval l'oï si li dist: 'Por Diu, Merlin, ensagne le moi plus proçainnement.' Et Merlins li a respondu: 'Il i a molt de poins, car encor anuit i poroies tu venir, mais tu i venras (65 *b*) ains un an. Mais gardes, quant tu i es venus, que tu ne soies mie sos, mais demande de quanque tu vois.' Et Perceval li a respondu: 'Sire, si ferai jou, se Dex me laist venir.' Lors li dist Merlin: 'Je m'en irai, je ne parlerai mais a toi, si sera molt esmieldrés de ta creance, et de quele eure que tu aies le vaissel a Jesus Christ en garde, je t'amenrai mon maistre qui a escrit tes oeuvres et les moies, partie non totes, et je m'en vois.' Atant s'en torna, et Perceval esgarde, et n'en vit mie. Atant leva se main et se segna, et vint a son ceval et i monta, et s'en torna le cemin que Merlins li avoit mostré, et cevauça tant par le volenté *D. 118 d.* Nostre Segnor qu'il vit meisme le jor que Merlins li avoit ensagnié le maison son taion, et cevauça tant qu'il vint a le porte, et descendi devant le sale.

Atant vinrent doi serjant encontre lui, et le bien vegnierent molt, et li aidierent a desarmer, et li establerent son ceval molt ricement, et l'enmenerent en le sale la u li rois ses taions estoit, et si tost com il vit Perceval si se dreça tant com il pot contre lui, et fu molt liés de se venue. Et Perceval s'assist joste lui et parlerent ensamble de plusors coses, et tant que li sire commanda que la table fust mise, et on si fist puis qu'il [l'] ot commandé, et s'asisent au mangier.

Si com on ot le premier mes aporté si issi[1] li lance d'une cambre, qui sannoit par le fer, et après vint le Graaus, et li demisele qui portoit les petis tailleors d'argent; et Perceval, qui molt fu desireus del demander, si dist au (65 *c*) segnor: 'Sire, par le foi que vous me devés, et que vous devés a tous homes, dites moi qui on sert de ces coses que je voi illuec porter?' Et tant tost com il ot çou dit si se regarda et vit que li Rois Peschiere estoit mués de se nature, et estoit garis de se maladie, et estoit sains comme pissons. Et quant Percevaus le vit si s'en mervella molt, et li sire sali sus[2] et prist Perceval par le pié, et li volt baisier, mais Perceval ne li volt soufrir. Atant
a. salirent li vallet par le maison et fisent de Perceval molt grant joie, et lors vint Perceval a lui, et li dist: 'Sire, saciés qu'Alains le Gros qui fu vostre fius, sire, saciés que cil fu mes pere.' Et quant li Rois Peschiere l'a oi si recommença la joie grans, et li dist: 'Biaus niés, je sui molt liés de le vostre venue' Atant s'agenella, et rendi sa grace a Nostre Segnor, et atant prist Perceval par le main, et l'enmena devant son vaissel, et li dist: 'Biaus niés, saciés que ce est ci li lance dont Longis feri Jesus Christ en le crois, et cil vaissiaus qu'on apele Graal saciés que çou est li sans que Joseph recuelli de ses plaies qui decouroient a le terre, et por çou l'apelons nous Graal qu'il agrée a tous preudomes, et a tous çaus qui en sa compagnie pueent durer, ne il ne poroit en sa compagnie soufrir pecié. Et je proierai a Nostre Segnor qu'il m'avoit que je porai faire de toi.'

Lors s'agenella Bron devant son vaissel, et dist: 'Biaus

[1] si issi le graal hors d'une chambre et les dignes reliques aveuc.

[2] 'Amis, sachiez que c'est molt sainte chose que vus avez demandé, mais je voil que vus me diez de par Deu qui vus estes,' etc.; (here is evidently an omission in M.)

Sire Dex, si voirement com çou est ci vostre beneois sans, et que vous sofristes qu'il me fu dounés après le mort Joseph, et que je l'ai gardé des puis en ça, si me faites voire (65 *d*) demostrance que jou en ferai en avant.'

Lors descendi li vois del Saint Esperit et li dist : 'Bron, or *D.* saces tu que li prophetie sera acomplie que Nostre Sire commanda a Joseph. Nostre Sire te mande qu'iceles sacrées[1] paroles qu'il aprist a Joseph en le prison quant il te bailla le Graal, apren a cestui, et met en garde de par Nostre Segnor, et d'ui en tierç jor departirés de cest siecle, et venras en la compagnie des Apostles.' Atant s'en parti le vois, et Bron le fist ensi com il l'ot ensagnié, et li aprist les sacrées paroles que Joseph li avoit aprises, que je ne vous puis dire ne ne doi, et li aprist tote la creance Nostre Segnor, et comment il l'avoit veu[2] petit enfant, et comment il l'avoit veu el temple, la u il avoit les maistres conclus, et si com li haut home de le terre de Judée l'acuelloient a haine, et si com il avoit . j . faus deciple qui le vendi as Juis, et si com il le vit en crois drecier, et si com ses serorges qui avoit nom Joseph l'avoit rové, et comment Pilate li avoit douné, et comment il l'osta de le crois, et si com il l'ot coucié a terre qu'il vit corre son sanc a le terre, et comment il en ot pitié, et comment il le reçut en . j . vaissel, 'en celui meisme que vous veés illuec ; ne en se compagnie ne puet veir peceor.' Et li aconta toute le vie que ses buens ancestres avoit menée, et Perceval l'a oie molt volentiers, et tant tost fu raplenis de la grasse del Saint Esperit. Et Bron li viels bailla Perceval le vaissel entre ses mains, et del vaissel issi une melodie, et une flairors issi precieuse qu'il lor sambla (66 *a*) qu'il fussent en Paradis o les angles, et Bron fu tous les

[1] segroies, also later.

[2] et comment il l'avoit veü mort et vif.

. iij . jors avuec Perceval, qui auques estoit de jors, et au tierç jor vint devant son vaissel et la se couça en crois, et rendi grasses a Nostre Segnor, et illuec devia. Et quant il devioit Perceval i vint, et garda, et vit David od sa harpe, et angles a plenté od encensiers u il atendoient l'ame Bron, et l'enporterent en le maisté avuec son pere qu'il avoit lonc tans servi. Et Percevaus demoura illuec, qui molt fu preudom, et chaïrent li encantement, et derompirent par tot le mont, et estoit a cel jor meisme li roi Artus a le table reonde, que Merlins fonda, et oirent . j . escrois issi grant qu'il s'en esfreerent molt durement, et li piere rasolda qui fendi desos Perceval quant il s'asist el liu vuit. Si lor vint a grant mervelle, car il ne savoient que ce senefioit, et lors vint Merlins a Blayse, et li conta ces coses et quant Blayses l'oi si li dist: 'Merlin, tu me desis que quant cis afaires seroit akievés que tu me metroies en la compagnie del Graal.' Et Merlins li respondi: 'Blayses, saces que tu i seras ains le jor de demain'; et atant prist Blayses Merlin et l'en aporta ciés le maison le rice Roi Pescheor, qui avoit nom Perceval, et demoura en la compagnie del Graal.

QUANT Merlins ot ceste cose afinée si s'en vint a le cort Artu a Carduel, et quant Artus le vit si en fist molt grant joie, et si home li disent qu'il demande Merlin quele senefiance ce fu de le piere qui rasolda (66 *b*) a le table reonde, et li rois dist: 'Je l'en pris molt, et qu'il le me die se lui plaist.' Et Merlins respondi: 'Artu, saces qu'a ton tans est acomplie li plus haute prophetie qu'onques avenist, car li Rois Pesciere est garis, et sont cheü li encantement de le terre de Bretagne, et Percevaus est sire del Graal par l'avenement de Nostre Segnor, et or poés veoir que molt

est preudon quant Nostre Sire li a baillié son digne sanc a garder, et por çou solda li piere qui fendue estoit desos lui, et bien sace Gavains et Kex li senescaus que ce fu Perceval meisme qui le tornoi del Blanc castel venqui et vos abati a le terre tous estendus, mais tant vous puis je bien dire qu'il a pris a le cevalerie congié, et se volra desormais tenir a le grasse de son Creator.'

Quant li rois et li baron l'orrent si en pleurent tot ensamble, et proierent a Nostre Segnor qu'il le menast a buene fin. Dont prist Merlins congié au roi, et s'en revint a Blayse et a Perceval et li fist tot metre en escrit. Et li baron qui a le cort Artu estoient, quant il oirent que li encantement estoient remés et les aventures, si en fu molt dolant, et li joune home, et li baceler, et cil de le table reonde disent qu'il n'avoient cure de sejorner avuec le roi Artu, et disent qu'il passeroient mer por cevalerie querre.

Quant Kex[1] li senescaus l'oi si en fu molt dolans, et s'en vint au roi, si li dist: 'Sire, saciés que tot li vostre baron vos vuelent guerpir por aler en estrange terre querre aven- *D. 1*
ture, et vous (66 *c*) estes li plus proisiés rois qu'onques fust en le terre de Bretagne, et avés le mellor cevalerie qu'onques nus hom eüst. Soviegne vous qu'il a eu . iij[2] . rois en Bretagne qui ont esté roi de France, et empereor de Rome, et Merlins dist que vous en seriés encore rois, et vous savés bien que Merlins est li plus sages hom del monde, ne onques a nule mençogne ne fu pris, et bien saciés que se vostre cevalerie vous depart, et va en estrange contrée por querre aventure, saciés que jamais tous ensamble ne les rarés. Or gardés rois, que ne soiés pereceus, ne si ne perdés pas le buen los que avés eü lonc tans, mais passés le mer, et conquerés France, et

[1] et G. (probably right). [2] . ij .

Normendie, et le departé[s] as barons qui vos ont longement servi, et nous vous en aiderons a nos pooirs.'

Quant Artus a oi ceste parole, si en a molt grant joie, et s'en vint a ses barons, et s'en consella de tel cose, et cascuns li loa endroit soi et disent qu'il li aideront volentiers; et quant Artus oi que li plus rice home de se terre li looient si tressali de joie et fist ses letres enseeler, et les fist a .j.[1] messages porter par tot son pais, et mist es
b. 120 b. letres que nus hom qui aidier se peüst ne remansist qu'il ne venist, car il donroit tant a cascuns qu'il le feroit rice 1
home. Et li message s'en tornerent et assamblerent si grant ost qu'il furent plus de · c ·[2] mile ançois que li mois passast. Et quant li rois les vit si en fu molt liés et les ala veïr, o lui mon segnor Gavains, et Keu li senescal, et le roi Lot d'Orchanie, et vint a cascune tente, et lors fist 1
si grant joie de cascun haut home, et traist a s'amor (66 *d*) lor cuers, et lor douna molt rices dons, et tant qu'il s'escrierent: 'Roi Artus saces que tu pers tout le mont par te perece, car saciés se vous aviés le cuer que nous avons nous vous conqueriemes France, et Normendie, et 2
Rome, et toute Lombardie, neis a Jerusalem te ferions nous porter corone, et seroies sire de tot le mont.'

Ensi disoient li Breton a lor segnor Artu, et quant li rois l'entendi si en fu molt liés et jura son cief que jamais ne cessera si ara conquis France que que soit de plus. Lors 2
fist mander tous les carpentiers de son pais et fist carpenter le plus rice estoire qu'onques oist on parler, et quant les nés et les galyes furent atornées si s'en vinrent au havne et misent ens pain et vin, et car, et sel, et armes, et dras, et entrerent les chevaliers es nés, et misent molt rices 3
cevaus. Et li rois Artus commanda Mordret se terre et son pais a garder, et se feme le roine, et cil Mordrés estoit

[1] .l. [2] . v .

frere mon segnor Gavains et fius le roi Lot d'Orchanie, et estoit de molt mal pensé. Atant prist Artus congié et s'en vint au port, et siglerent au vent et as estoiles, et tant alerent par mer que lor estoires ariva en Normendie, et si tost com il furent issu des nés si corurent par le terre et prisent homes et femes et proies, et escillierent molt durement le pais, et saciés qu'onques terre ne fu a si grant dolor atornée.

Quant li dus le seut si manda au roi trives tant qu'il eust parlé a lui, et li rois Artus li otroia, et vint en l'ost Artu, et devint ses hom, et dist qu'il tenroit se terre de lui par treü rendant, et li rois le reçut molt liement; (67 *a*) et li dus avoit une molt bele fille, et li rois le douna a Keu son senescal et toute le terre au duc ensement. Atant s'en departi li rois, et trespassa le terre au duc, et entra *D.* en le terre le roi de France. A cel tans avoit . j . roi en France qui avoit non Floires[1], et quant il sot qu'Artus venoit sor lui si en fu molt dolans, et semonst ses os par tote se terre, et assamblerent a Paris, et quant il furent assamblé si i ot molt grant cevalerie, et la dist li roi Floires qu'il atendroit Artu. Et Artus qui cest afaire sot cevauça la u il le cuida trover et vint droitement a . ij . liues de l'ost des François. Et quant li rois Floires sot sa venue, si prist . ij . mesages, et les envoia en l'ost Artu, et lor dist: 'Segnor mesage, vous m'en irés droitement as Bretons, et dites le roi Artu que ja mar por le terre conquerre fera chevalier ocire, mais dites lui se il est tant preus qu'il ost desrannier l'onor de France seul a seul, moi e lui, saciés que je sui tos près d'entrer en le bataille, u il ait France, u jou aie Bretagne.' Atant vinrent li mesage en l'ost la u li roi Artus estoit, et le demanderent, et on lor ensagna son pavellon, et il i alerent et descendirent devant son

[1] Froles.

pavellon, et vinrent ens, et le saluerent, et li conterent tot mot a mot çou que lor sire lor avoit encargié a dire, et nule cose ne li celerent.

Quant Artus a oi ce qui li mesage li avoient conté, si parla a aus, et lor dist: 'Segnor, or me dites le roi Floire, en cui subjection vous estes, qu'ensi com il l'a mandé ensi
D. 120 d. le ferai jou, et li dites que por toute le terre[1] de Bretagne ne li fau—(67 *b*)—roie jou de çou qu'il m'en ahati.' Et li mesage respond: 'Nous volons que vous le nous creantés qu'il ni ara garde se de vous seul non.' Et li rois lor creanta, et li plus haut home de Bretagne creanterent as mesages que se li rois Artus estoit ocis qu'il s'en iroient arriere en lor pais, et tenront lor terre del roi Floire, et li mesage lor creanterent que se li rois Floire estoit ocis qu'il li rendroient tous les castiaus de France, et li feroient homage, et deviserent qu'au quinzieme jor seroit la bataille.

Atant s'en tornerent li mesage, et conterent au roi Floire çou qu'il avoient trové au roi Artu. Atant se deslogierent Breton, et vinrent logier devant Paris, si près qu'on peüst lancier en le vile, et s'entredounerent treves d'une part et d'autre, si que li Breton alerent en Paris acater a mangier. Li termes passa et vint li jors que li rois avoit mis, et lors s'atornerent li doi roi si com por combatre, et s'arma cascuns de molt rices garnemens roiaus, et s'en entrerent li doi roi en une ille par desos Paris, et sisent sor les . ij . mellors cevaus qu'il orent. Et li François[2] et li Breton les esgardérent par commun consel tout en pais, qu'onques garnement n'i orent, et disent qu'il atendroient le merci Nostre Segnor, et esgarderoient lor segnor qui lor cors avoient mis en aventure de le mort por l'onor conquerre.
D. 121 a. Et li doi roi qui en l'ille estoient s'entrelongierent . ij .

[1] la meitie dou reaume de Longres.
[2] li Romain (so also later).

arpens por miels assambler, et puis s'entrevinrent ambedui de si grant aleüre, (67 *c*) et s'entreferirent des lances parmi les escus issi durement que les lances tronçonnerent et en volerent li tronçon encontremont, et s'entrecontrerent des pis et des hiaumes si malasivement qu'il s'entrabatirent des cevaus a terre, mais Artus sali premiers en piés, et sacha s'espée Eschaliborc qui molt estoit de buen acier, et s'en vint vers Floire. Et Floires li rois resali sus, et resaça s'espée molt hardiement, et passa li uns vers l'autre, et saciés que li François et li Breton prioient cascuns por lor segnors, et li doi roi qui nient s'entreamoient s'entrevinrent as espées.

Li rois Floires fu forment corageus et hardis, et molt se fioit en sa vertu, et tint l'espée al puing destre, et va ferir Artu parmi l'escu qu'il li fendi et colpa quanqu'il consivi, et li cols qui fu envoiés par grant force descendi encontre val, et li desrompi . ccc . mailles del hauberc, et vint li brans avalant parmi le cuisse si qu'il li trença plus de plainne paume del carnal, et avala li brans par grant air. Et li trença l'esporon od troi doie del pié, et feri li brans en terre mie ausi, et Artus fu auques estounés del colp, et Floires le hurte de l'espaule qu'a poi que ne le fist chaoir a terre. Et quant li Breton le virent, et mesire Gavains, si en orent grant duel, et orent tot grant paor de lor segnor, car li rois Floires estoit graindre d'Artu le teste a tot le *D.* hiaume, et bien parut a son contenement qu'il eüst molt hardement (67 *d*) et force, et por tant si en furent en doutance.

Quant li rois Artus vit se gent fremir, et avoit paor de lui, si en fu molt dolans, et en ot molt grant honte, et vint au roi qui enmi le camp l'atendoit, et tint l'espee el puing destre qu'on apeloit Escaliborc,[1] et il l'en ala ferir par molt

[1] Caliborne.

fier mal talent parmi son escu, qu'il li colpa et fendi dusqu'en le boucle, et colpa çou qu'il en atainst, et descendi li cols parmi son hiaume si qu'il li trença le cercle, ne onques li coife ne li valut nule cose que l'espée ne li trençast grant partie de le teste et des caviaus plus de plainne puing, et se l'espée ne li tornast el puing il l'eüst mort, et nonporquant li vola li hiaumes de le teste par les las qui furent rompu. Et quant li rois Floires le vit si en ot grant mautalent et ala ferir Artu parmi le hiaume, mais il ne le pot empirer.

Quant li rois Floires le vit si s'en esmaia molt, et lors li avala li sans parmi les uels, et parmi le face, et perdi le veüe si qu'il ne pot le roi Artu coisir, et li fali li cuers, et chai tot adens en mi le pré, et quant li rois Artus le vit si en fu molt liés, et vint cele part, et prist s'espée, et s'abaissa et li trença le teste. Et quant li François virent que lor sire fu ocis si en orent grant dolor a lor cuers, et s'en
c fuirent par dedens Paris, et li Breton vinrent a lor segnor Artu, et le fisent monter sor .j. ceval, et l'enmenerent (68 *a*) a molt grant joie a son tré et le desarmerent isnelement, et lors prist li rois .ij. mesages et les envoia a çaus de Paris por savoir qu'il volroit faire, et saciés qu'en cele mesage ala li rois Lot d'Orchanie et Gavains ses fils, qui molt savoit bel parler et ert tenus a un des plus sages de l'ost, et estoit buens chevaliers, et adrois de parler droituriers en jugement, et saciés qu'en le terre de Bretagne ne peut on trover .j. mellor chevalier, des que Perceval ot laissié le cevalerie. Atant vinrent a Paris, et quant cil qui estoient as murs les virent venir si lor ouvrirent les portes, et Gavains i entra, et le roi Lot ses pere, et saluerent les .xij. pers del pais qui el castel estoient, et virent les mesages et les chevaliers qui avoient le bataille devisée d'Artu et del roi Floire; et dont parla Gavains, et lor dist:

'Segneur,[1] le roi Artus vous mande que vous li rendés le castel ensi com cil mesage l'avoient devisé, car la parole fu devisée qu'Artus et Floires se combatroient ensamble par tele maniere que je vos dirai, et en trairai les mesages meismes a garant qui vinrent au tref le nostre roi noncier la bataille. Nous fiançames que se Artus estoit vaincus que nous venriemes au roi Floire, et li feriemes homage, et tenriemes nostre terre de lui. Ensi le fiançames, et li vostre mesage fiancierent que se Floires le vostre roi estoit vaincus que vous venriés au roi Artu, et vous metriés en se merci, et tele seroit la merci que vous tenriés vos castiaus de lui, et seroit France en son commandement, (68 *b*) et demandés a mesages qui je croi et tieng a preudomes se le parole ala ensi.' Quant li citeain oirent mon segnor Gavains si l'en proisierent molt, et lors disent: 'Nous nous en consellerons.' Atant s'en entrerent en une molt rice cambre, et parlerent li haut home de France, et disent: 'Segnor, nous n'avons pas force contre cest roi Breton, qui ci est venus contre nous, ne nous n'avons pas viande por passer lonc tans, et vous poés bien savoir qu'il ne s'en ira or mie' Et li mesage qui estoient alé por l'afermement de le bataille se leverent et disent: 'Segneur saciés que nous volons estre acuité de le fiance que nous fiançames Artu.' Et lor atornerent lor consel qu'il li rendroient le vile, et li feroient homage, et tenroient France del roi Artu. Lors s'en revinrent a roi Lot, et a Gavains son fil, et li disent: 'Segnor, nous veons bien que nous ne poriemes durer contre le vostre gent, et se nous i poyemes durer si volriemes nous les noes fiances acuiter. Saciés que nous

[1] li roi Artur nos envoie a vus savoir comment vus voudrez le reaume maintenir. (The entire *Mort Artus* section is so much compressed in D, that without comparison of the complete texts it is not possible fully to demonstrate their mutual relation.)

rendrons France au roi Artu, et li ferons homage, et li baillerons nos cors et nos avoirs, et nous metrons tot en se merci, mais por Diu or nous tiegne a droit, et se il le fait autrement li peciés en ert siens, et por Diu nous tiegne en tele maniere comme li rois Floires nous soloit tenir.'

Dont lor a respondu Gavains : 'Segneur, saciés qu'il ja ne vous fera cose u il ait desraison.' Et atant s'en torna mesire Gavains et li rois Lot ses pere, et s'en (68 *c*) vinrent au roi Artu, et li aconterent tout çou que li François lor avoient conté. Quant li rois Artus l'a oi si en fu molt liés, et errament fist s'ost deslogier, et cevauça vers Paris. Et quant cil de Paris les virent venir si s'en issirent encontre lui, et clerc, et evesque, et abé, a crois et a cieres reliques, et a filatieres et a encensiers, et jetoient le mente et le flor par devant lui la ou il aloit, et avoient les tables mises parmi le cité cargies de pain et de car et de venisons, et de buen vin et de rices espesces avoient cargies les tables as haus homes, et avoient le palais la u li rois Artus descendi de rices pales et de rices aornemens portendu. Lors assisent Artu en le caiere roial, et li aporterent le corone roial de France, et le coronerent, et fisent roi de France, et li fiancierent loial homage et foi et loiauté a tenir. Et Artus les reçut, et les ama molt, et demoura en le terre de France .1. jors[1], et si fist molt biaus dons a ses cevaliers. Lors dient li chevalier de France, et de Normendie, qu'il onques n'orent si buen segnor, et i a assés de barons de France qui miels aiment Artus qu'il n'orent onques fait Floire, car Artus savoit biau parler et traire les gens a amor, et non mie par faintes paroles mais par biaus dons douner. Et saciés qu'Artus sejorna en Paris .1. jors, et puis s'en ala par le pais de France savoir se il i aroit castel qni encontre lui se tenist.

[1] demi an.

Mais saciés qu'il onques ne trova castel qu'il ne fesist tant qu'on l'en aportast les cles, et les (68 *d*) atraioit a s'amor, et li novele estoit par toute le contrée alée qu'Artus avoit ocis le roi de France, et par cest afaire si li abandonerent tous les castiaus. Lors douna li rois Artus a Gavain son neveu le marce de Bretagne, et a Bediver douna tout le Vermendois, buene terre et plentive, et saciés qu'en le maisnie Artu n'ot haut baron qu'il ne donast u cité u castel. Et quant il ot tot ensi atorné son afaire si assist ses baillius en ses castiaus et en ses marces.

Quant Artus ot conquis France si dist qu'il ne voloit plus demourer, et prist congié as barons de le terre et il le convoierent longement, et puis s'en retornerent, et Artus cevauça tant qu'il vint en Normendie, la u ses estoires estoit, et i avoit laissiés .vc. chevaliers por garder les vaissiaus, et Artus entra es vaissiaus, et se cevalerie avuec lui, et lors drecierent li maronier les voiles, et li vens se feri ens, et lors guerpirent le port, et siglerent tant qu'il vinrent au port a Douvres, et puis issirent des nés, et misent fors cevaus et palefrois, et quant il furent tot issu fors si furent molt liés quant il revirent lor païs et lor contrée.

Quant Mordrès li frere Gavains oi dire qu'Artus ses oncles revenoit, si monta od .l. chevaliers, et le roine autresi, et cevaucierent la u il cuidierent trover le roi, et cevaucierent tant qu'il encontrerent le roi, et fisent grant feste de lui, et lors ala le novele par tot le païs que li rois Artus revenoit, et qu'il avoit France conquise Quant les communes gens l'oirent si en furent molt lie, et vinrent dames (69 *a*) et demiseles qui lor fius et lor neveus i avoient ; si ne veistes onques ausi grant joie faire comme li uns faisoit a l'autre, et s'entrebaisoient. Après çou si parla li rois et dist : 'Segneur, je vuel que tot cil qui or

sont ci a moi soient a ma cort a Carduel en Gales, a le Saint[1] Jehan en esté.' Et iceste parole si fu criée par toute l'ost, et li rois manda les plus rices homes de son pais, et lor pria, et il li orent en covent, qu'il i seroient tout a le Saint Jehan, et dist Artus: 'Car jou i volrai departir de mes avoirs partie tot communalement, ne ja ni ara si povre que je ne face rice.'

Atant departirent, et Artus s'en ala a .j. de ses castiaus, et i sejorna une piece, et parloient ensamble que bele aventure li estoit avenue, qui estoit si amontés qu'il avoit
D. 122 a France conquise. Entrues qu'Artus sejorna si trespassa li saisons et aproisma le Saint Jehan, et lors si assemblerent[2] tot li haut home de Bretagne, et en i vinrent tant qu'on nes peust nombrer, et i ot chevaliers a plenté rices et povres. Lors vint li jors, et li rois ala oir le messe. Et li canta l'Arc. (*sic*) qui tant li aida a sa roiauté, et quant il ot le messe oie il s'en revint arriere en son palais, et fist on l'aigue corner aval le vile, et s'assisent li chevalier au mangier. Lors s'asist li rois Artus el plus haut dois, et avuec lui li rois Lot d'Orchanie; d'autre part s'asist li rois de Danemarce, et li rois d'Irlande, et ot a le cort .vij. rois qui tot estoient obeissant a son commandement.

Si com li rois seoit au mangier, et on avoit le premier mès aporté (69 *b*) devant lui, si regarda Artus, et si baron, et si roi, et virent venir parmi l'uis de le sale .xij. homes blans et kenus, et estoient molt ricement aparellié, et portoient .xij. rains d'olive. Quant il furent entré en le sale si regarderent le baronie et le cevalerie qui a le cort le roi estoit, et lors dist li uns a l'autre privéement: 'Segnor saciés que cis rois est molt rices.' Atant trespasserent

[1] dedenz .j. mois (later, Penthecoste).

[2] lors assambla li rois Artur sa cort a Penthecost a Cardueil, et quant la messe fu chantee, etc.

toutes les tables et vinrent molt iréement la u Artus estoit, et lors s'aresterent tot . xij . et se teurent tot fors l'un, et cil parla molt orguelleusement et dist: 'Cil Dex qui sor tot le monde a poesté et en puet faire a son commandement il garisse l'empereur de Rome en cief, et en après l'Apostole et les senators de Rome qui le loi doivent garder et maintenir, et cil Dius que vous m'oés ramentevoir il confonde Artu et tos cels qui sont en son commandement car il a mespris vers Diu, et vers Sainte Yglyse, et envers le loi de Rome, car il a recolpé et retaillié çou qui si en devoit estre, et ocis le roi [1] en bataille que se terre tenoit de Rome, et en rendoit treu a Rome cascun an. Or sacés que nous, en mervellant [2] nous desdagnons, et en desdagnant nous en mervellons, qui si viels gens comme vous estes, que tos li siecles vous doit despire, et estes serf de vos testes, et tos jors l'avés esté, et li vostre ancestres autresi, et or vous volés enfrancir, et *D. 122 b.* vivre sans servage ausi com autre gent.

Vous savés bien qu'a Julius Cesar fustes vous tot en servage, et li rendistes treü, et autre roi de Rome si l'ont tenu et receü, ne onques nul jor (69 *c*) sans servage ne vesquistes. Or saciés que nous en avons grant desdaing que vous vous volés enfrancir, et saciés que li emperere en a si grant desdaing et si tres grant vielté qu'il ne poroit nului croire que vous vous volsissiés esfrancir de son servage. Si vous mande et commande par nous xij . que vous veés ici, que vous tel treu com vostre ancestres li rendi, que vous li envoiés tot autretel com Julius Cesar le reçevoit, et se vous ne le faites li emperere venra sor vous; et si vous lo que vous li envoiés car li Romain sont tant fort airé sor vous, neis la menue gent del pais vont

[1] Frolles.

[2] nos vos merveillons mult et avon grant dedeing.

criant a l'empereor: "Sire, por Diu, car nous laissiés aler sor le chienaille de Bretagne qui ont destruit France!" Et saciés que si l'empereor lor en dounoit le don il venroient sor vous. Mais il ne peut croire que vous soiés si eslevé que vous aiés conquise France; et saciés que se il vient sor vous fuirs ne vous vaut rien, vous ne sarés ja en cel liu aler ne fuir qu'il ne vous en jet, et a juré sa corone qu'il vous fera escorcier et toute le cevalerie de votre terre fera bolir en caudieres, et ardoir en fu, et les venderont li un as autres, et en feront grant maisel.'

Quant Artus a oi et entendu çou que li mesage orent aconté si[1] li remua tos li sans, et fremi, et ot honte por ses barons qui seoient as tables par le sale, et sali en piés, et dist: 'Segnors vous saiies bien Romane, je ne sai u vous fustes né, et je vos ai bien entendus, or si vous proi que vous vous seés, et mangiés se vous en avés mestier.' E cil (69*d*) respondent: 'Nous ne mangeriemes a te cort por le puing a perdre, car nous seriemes tout denaturé.' Quant Artus les oï si en rist et dist: 'Segnor, de le requeste que vous m'avés demandé je m'en conselleraï, et le vos lairai briément savoir.' Lors apela ses barons, le roi d'Irlande, et le roi d'Orchanie, et mon segnor Gavains, et Mordret son frere, et Keu le senescal, et Bediver, et tant d'autres qu'il furent .xij., et entrerent en une cambre molt rice, et estoit le cambre painte molt ricement, et en la painture avoit paint ensi comme les .iij. duesses donerent Paris le pome, et li promist li une le plus bele feme del monde, et li autre li promist le plus grant rikece del monde, et li tierce li promist, et li eust doné, qu'il fust li mieldres chevaliers de toute le terre. Quant cascune li

[1] si en fu mult dolenz, et apela le roi Loth a conseil, et le mena en une chambre et li demanda conseil de cest afaire.

ot cel don fait qu'eles cuidoient que l'une ne seust nient de l'autre, si pensa Paris qu'il estoit buens chevaliers et li uns des plus vaillans de tot son pais, et vit qu'il n'avoit mestier d'estre plus rices hom qu'il estoit, et pensa que miels li vauroit li deduis de le bele feme que nule autre cose, si prist le pome, et le douna le diuesse qui le feme li avoit promise. Et quant ele vit le pome que Paris li avoit dounée si en fu molt lie, que par cel don ot ele poesté desor les autres diuesses, et lors li amonesta feme tele qu'il n'ot onques si bele el monde, mais il acata trop cier sa biauté. D'icele estoire estoit le cambre painte, la u Artus enmena les . xij . barons por consel querre.

Atant lor dist: 'Segnor vous estes tot mi home, et je sui le vostre sire; vous avés bien oi que li mesage l'empereor (70 *a*) de Rome m'ont laidengié, et mesaesmé par parole, et molt m'ont dit grant laidure, ne onques samblant n'en fis. Or si vous proi que vous me donés consel tel que les vos onors i soient, et saciés que je ferai buenement çou que vous me loerés.' Adont se dreça en piés le roi Lot d'Orchanie, qui molt estoit preudom et sages, et parla au roi, et dist: 'Sire vous demandés consel et nous le vous donrons buen se vous le savés entendre. Vous avés oi que li mesage l'empereor de Rome vous sont venu laidir, et vous ont reprové que Julius Cesar conquist Rome et France et Bretagne, vostre regne, et ce fu voirs, car il l'ot par traison et traison n'est mie drois, et je vous en dirai une partie comment il l'ot. Il fu jadis qu'il estoit uns rois, et avoit . j . frere, et . ij . biaus enfans. Cil rois morut, et laissa se terre a ses . ij . enfans, mais ce sambla au commun peule que trop estoient de joune aé por regne maintenir, et baillierent le roiaume a lor oncle, et il fu rois, et quant il fu rois si fist de l'un de ses neveus duc, et de l'autre conte. Et cil qui rois estoit avoit non

Casibelan, et li mesfirent ses neveu, ne sai quel cose, mais il les manda a se cort et les volt faire ocire. Quant li enfant virent que lor oncles les haoit, et lor avoit tolu le roiaume, adont si manderent Julius Cesar qu'il pooit bien conquerre Engleterre, et Julius Cesar i avoit arivé devant par .ij. fois, et ne pooit rien forfaire Casibelan. Quant il oi que li enfant le manderent si en (70 *b*) fu molt liés, et lor remanda qu'il li envoiassent ostages, et il li envoierent, et fisent bien seür. Atant entra Julius Cesar en mer, et ariva en cest pais, et li doi enfant orent grans as assamblees, et vinrent a Julius Cesar, et lors vinrent la u Casibelan estoit, et se combatirent a lui, et le venquirent. Et quant il l'orent vencu, Julius Cesar prist les homages des .ij. freres, et fist de l'ainsné roi, et li rendirent treü, et par cest afaire si claimment li Breton (?) treü sor vous. Or vous dirai autre cose, il i eut .ij. freres en Bretagne, cil doi frere si en fu li uns només Brenes, et li autres Belin; cil doi frere orent si grant poissance qu'il passerent mer et conquisent France, et d'illuec en alerent desci a Rome. Quant cil de Rome les virent venir si orent paor, et issirent contre aus, et lor jurerent qu'il seroient a lor commandement, et en baillierent as .ij. freres .xl. ostages. Et quant li ostage furent douné si dist Brenes et Belins qu'il revenroient en Bretagne, et lors s'en retornerent, et li Romain, quant il les virent retorner, si disent que molt estoient mauvais que lor ostages en laissoient mener. Lors prisent consel qu'il lor venroient au devant, a un desrubé passer u il avoit grans destrois. Ensi le firent, et assamblerent .l. mile chevaliers, et les misent en .j. mal pas, et Brenes et Belins avoient lor gens parties, si en menoit Belins le moitié, et Brenes l'autre moitié, et es .ij. parties avoit plus de .c. mile (70 *c*) homes. Lors vint Brenes au destroit et volt passer, et li

Romain li salirent encontre, et les encontrerent molt ruistement, et lors fu Brenes esmaiés, et vint a un vallet, si li dist: 'Biaus amis alés a Belin mon frere et li dites que nous somes trais, et li dites qu'il passe au destroit par deriere les Romains, et les asaille par deriere. Ensi com li rois l'ot dit au mesage li mesages l'ala conter a Belin, et quant Belin le seut si en fu molt dolans, et cevauça a esporon, et passa .j. destroit si com .j. paisans le guia, et lors vint a le bataille, et Brenes estoit ja auques atains de combatre, et Belins escria s'ensagne, et vint a le bataille atot .1. mile homes, et escria 'Bretagne!' et Belins (Brenes?) escria 'France!' et lors furent li Romain esmaié, et li Breton les ocioient, et furent tot ocis li Romains, et lors retorna et Brenes et Belins a Rome, et se loga devant le vile, et fist drecier les forques, et i fist pendre tous les enfans que li rice home de Rome li avoient baillié, et lors li rendirent le vile, et fu coronés a empereor, et li rendirent li Romain treü, et par ceste raison me samble il que vous devés avoir segnorie sor les Romains, et bien devés estre emperere de Rome; et li claiment, et vous clamés. Or n'i sai jou el mais que vous alés ensamble, qui miels pora esploitier miels face, et plus en ait!

'Sire, encore vous dirai autre cose. Membre vous il que *D. 122 c* Merlins vint a le votre cort le jor meisme que vous (70 *d*) fustes rois. Il vous dist qu'il avoit eu .ij. rois en Bretagne qui avoient esté roi de France, et empereor de Rome. Sire, vous estes rois de France, et je vous di que vous serés rois de Rome se vous en avés le cuer del conquerre, car Merlins ne menti onques, ains a dit voir tos dis. Or passés le mer, et mandés vos chevaliers, et assamblés as Romains, et je vous di que vous en arés le victoire, car vous arés le mellor cevalerie del monde.' Et lors s'escrierent tot li .xij. consellier: 'Artu, sire,

cevauciés a force, et conquerrés Romenie et toute le terre de Lombardie, et nos t'aiderons a nos pooirs.'

Quant Artus oi ses barons, si en fu molt liés, et dist: 'Segnor, il me samble que li rois Lot a molt bien parlé, et saciés a çou qu'il m'a conté que se li Romains ne fussent ça venu se deüsse je la aler por requerre çou que mes ancestres ont tenu.' Atant vint Artus el palais, et trova les
d. mesagiers de Rome, et lor dist: 'Segnor, or saciés que je m'en mervel molt durement u li emperere prist le cuer qu'il m'a mandé treü, et tel outrage que vous m'avés dit, et saciés certainement que je de servage m'osterai encontre lui, et bien li dites qu'ains .viij. mois le volrai jou si aprocier qu'on pora de m'ost lancier .j. gavrelot dedens Rome, se il encontre moi ne vient et me volrai a lui combatre cors a cors, u grant a grant.' Et li mesage respondent: 'Nous vous faisons seur que li emperere vous sera au devant atout .cc. mil homes u plus.' Et atant s'en issirent de le sale molt fierement, qu'onques congié ne demanderent, et s'en (71 *a*) alerent et vinrent a le mer, et passerent outre, et cevaucierent tant par lor journèes qu'il vinrent a Rome, et i troverent l'empereor, et li conterent tot cil com il avoient esploitié, et si com li Breton estoient orguelleus et fors (*sic*) grans. 'Et ont le pris de le cevalerie del siecle, par une table reonde qu'il ont estorée, et saciés que nous contames Artus vostre mesage, et il dist qu'il s'en conselleroit, et il mena .xij. de ses barons, et furent longement en se cambre, et lors torna a çou lor consaus qu'Artus vous mande qu'ançois .viij. mois sera il venus si près de Rome qu'on i poroit .j. gavrelot lancier de s'ost, se vos ne li venés encontre lui.'

Quant li emperere entendi ses mesages si en fu molt iriés, et lors fist escrire cartres et seyaus, et assambla le plus grant ost qu'onques nus hom veist, et manda soldoiers

et archiers, et grant cevalerie et serjans a ceval et serjans a pié qui portent lances et gavrelots; et bien saciés qu'il manda le roi d'Espagne, qui Sarrasin estoit, et cil Sarrasin i amena le plus grant ost qu'onques nus hom veist, ne onques rois n'ot forçor empire, et vinrent tot au commandement l'empereor; et bien saciés que la grant ost, quant on l'ot esmeüe, prisa on a. ccc. mil homes, tos desfensables por lor armes porter; et quant li empires fu assamblés si se clama li emperere a aus, et lor mostra comment Artus se voloit reveler encontre lui, et avoit ocis le roi Floire en bataille qui se terre tenoit de Rome. 'Et si mande qu'il volra avoir treu de nous, or si vous (71 *b*) proi que vous me conselliés encontre ces coses.' *D.*

Quant li baron l'ont oi si en orent molt grant desdaing et s'escrient tout ensamble: 'Drois emperere, cevauce a force, et passés les mons, et en après le mer, et conquerrés Bretagne, et vengiés le roi Floire qu'Artus li rois de Bretagne a ocis, et nous vous en aiderons tout a nos pooirs.' Endementiers que li emperere estoit a cil parlement si vinrent. iij. mesage a l'empereor, et le saluerent en lor langage molt hautement de par le Soudan, et disent: 'Sire emperere, li Soudans vous mande qu'il vient au vostre commandement por destruire les Bretons, et por çou le fait que li rois d'Espagne i est venus qui ses frere est, et bien vous fac seür qu'on nombre s'ost a. l.[1] mile Sarrasins, et se logera es prés desos Rome d'ui en tierç jor.' Quant li emperere l'oi si en fu molt liés, et[2] quant vint au tierç ior si monta et tot li senator de Rome avuec lui, et cevaucierent a grant joie encontre le Soudan, et l'encontrerent a demie liue de Rome. Et quant li emperere le vit si poinst encontre lui, et li jeta ses bras au col, ne onques n'i garda ne Crestienté ne batesme qu'il ne

[1] .c. [2] monta erraument.

le baisoit ens en le bouce, et tot li senator de Rome l'enclinerent molt parfondement et si savoient bien qu'il mesprendoient vers Diu, mais molt redoutoient les Bretons. Et lors se logierent desos Rome, et sejornerent . xv . [1] jors por (17 *c*) reposer lor gens, et en ces . xv . jors si meserra
b molt li emperere vers Diu, et vers Sainte Yglyse, car il prist a feme le fille le Soudan, qui paiene estoit, et qui molt estoit bele feme, si en pesa molt au commun peule de Rome, et disent par maintes fois que li emperere avoit perdue grant partie de se creance.

Après quant li . xv . jor furent passé si cevauca li os, et trespasserent les pais et les terres, mais des jornées qu'il firent, ne de çou qu'il lor avint, ne parole pas Blayses,[2] car Merlins n'en volt faire mention, mais tant vos puis je bien dire qu'il vinrent en le terre de Provence, et tant qu'il oirent dire qu'en le marce de Bretagne[3] estoit Keus li senescaus Artu, qui la gardoit le terre. Et quant li emperere le sot si cevauca cele part, et Artus le seut par ses espies, et estoit ja au port venus sor le mer de Douvre, et la faisoit aparellier se navie, car il avoit molt grant gent.

Quant li estoires fu aparelliés si vint Artus a Mordret son neveu, qui frere estoit mon segnor Gavains, si li commanda se terre, et ses castiaus et se feme a garder, mais miels li venist qu'il les eüst andeus bolis[4] en caudieres, car Mordrès, qui ses niés estoit, fist vers lui le gregnor traison dont on oist onques parler, car il ama se feme, et fist tant as cevaliers et as castelains, et as baillius, qu'il le reçurent a segnor, et espousa le roine, et mist garnisons as
c castiaus de le terre, et se fist coroner a roi. Mais (71 *d*) Artus qui de çou ne se dounoit garde, fist les chevaliers entrer es nés, et les armes, et lor harnas, et li maroniers

[1] . xij .
[2] le livre.
[3] Normandie.
[4] noyez.

l'ariverent a . j . port qu'on apele Chalais.[1] Et quant il furent arivé si le firent savoir as barons de le terre, et cil en firent grant joie. Lors envoia li rois par le commun consel de l'ost . ij . mesages a Paris, et cil de Paris en firent molt grant joie, et disent qu'il le recevroient comme segneur. Et quant Artus le sot si vint a Paris, et la assambla son empire, et li Romains et li Sarrasins oirent dire qu'Artus estoit a Paris, si cevauçierent tant qu'il vinrent a . iij . liues de Paris,[2] et lors envoia Artus Gavains *D.* a l'ost et Bediver, por savoir se li emperere se volroit combatre. Gavains i ala et Bedivers, et vinrent au tref, et estoient sor . ij . buens cevaus, et il estoient meisme ricement armé. Gavains conta son mesage molt orguelleusement, et molt laidoia l'empereor par parole, et li dist molt lait, et tant qu'a . j . legat en pesa, et dist: 'Tostans sont Breton bordeor et mal parlier et vanteor mauvais chevalier, et se vous parlés plus, je vos irai sacier jus del ceval.' *D.*

Atant le feri Bedivers d'une lance parmi le cors, et *D.* Gavains feri . j . des neveus de l'empereor parmi le cors de se lance, et puis traist l'espée, et feri . j . chevalier parmi le cief, si qu'il le fendi dusqu'el braier. Lors point avant et en toli a . vi . les testes. Atant s'en cuidierent partir, mais il ne porent, car il en vinrent plus de . xx . m. sor aus a esporon, et les avoient passés . j . arpent de terre si que devant Bediver et devant mon segnor Gavains en (*72a*)

[1] galois !

[2] D. here places an appeal of Arthur to his men, representing that the Emperor is bringing heathen to slay Christians; they set forth to find the enemy's host, 'et chevaucha et chevaucha a tot son empire la ou il quida l'empereor trover,' till within three leagues, as in M., then take counsel to send two messengers to demand submission of emperor —message given in detail, no truce to Sarrasins. (In all this section D. is more detailed than M. The details of Gawain's and Bedivere's mission differ greatly.)

avoit plus de . ij . mile, et lors s'assamblérent entor Gavains, et entor Bediver od espées nues, od lances, od gavrelos, od dars, et od pieres, et od bastons, et lor donérent tant de cols qu'il les durent avoir ocis, et ocisent a cascun son ceval. A mon segnor Gavains crut mautalens, et traist l'espée, et prist l'escu, et feri . j . Romain qui molt avoit grant terre a justicier, et li douna si grant colp qu'il le fendi dusqu'el pis, et prist le ceval et i monta, et vint a Bediver qui molt forment se desfendoit, et li cuida aidier, mais ainçois qu'il i venist fu il rabatus, et ses cevaus ocis sos lui Et quant Gavains vit qu'il ot perdu le ceval qu'il ot gaaingié si resali sus, et se desfendi molt durement. Cui
c. caut se desfense ne valut rien? quant li . xx . m.[1] qui estoient el bos salirent, et se ferirent as Romains, et les departirent molt iréement, et les ocisent tous, que gaires n'en escapa ; et lors s'en tornerent li mesage qui le conterent a Artu, et quant Artus l'a oi si a fait se gent armer, et lors commanda qu'on sonast . ij . c . cors, et . ij . c . buisines, et on si fist ; et lors sambla que toute li terre crollast, et estoit si grans le resons que ce sambloit que toute li terre fondist, et n'i oist on mie Diu tonnant, et cevaucierent tot ordeneement a bataille, et fisent porter le confanon roial a Saigremor, et encontrerent les . xx . m. qui mon segnor Gavains avoient delivré, et s'ajosterent a aus, et Gavains les guia. Lors revinrent li fuiant au tref l'empereor de Rome (*72b*) et li contérent que Bretiaus son frere estoit mors ; et quant l'emperere l'oi si en fu molt dolans, et dist qu'il le volra
d. molt cierement vendre Artu et les Bretons, et lors fist soner l'olifant au maistre tref, et ce fu senefiance qu'il s'armassent. Et quant li Romain oirent l'olifant bondir si s'armerent, et

[1] There has been no mention of an ambush, something has dropped out. D. says at an earlier stage that Arthur has placed . x . mille in ambush.

li paien autresi, et lors ordenerent lor batailles et lor eschieles, et cevaucierent la u il cuidierent trover Artu, et Artus contre aus autresi, et lors s'entreproismierent tant qu'il se pooient bien entrevеir tot de plain.

Quant il se furent si entraproismié qu'il s'entrevirent, adont n'i ot si hardi qui ne s'esmaiast, et lors se confesserent li un Crestien as autres, et se clamerent tos mautalens cuites, et prisent pels d'erbe et s'acommunierent, et lors remonterent es cevaus, et tant saciés vous bien qu'onques si grans empires ne fu esgardés, et quant il s'entraprocierent qu'il n'i ot que del ferir, si laissa le ceval aler mesire Gavains, qui menoit le premiére eskiele, et ala ferir . j . Sarrasin sor son escu qu'il li perça, et le hauberc autresi, et li guia le fer parmi outre le pis, et l'abati jus de son ceval mort. Et lors acoururent d'autres pars. Gavains avoit assamblé . xx . m. homes encontre . l . mile Sarrasins si n'i pot avoir longe durée, nonporquant en ocisent . xi . mile des paiens. Et des gens Gavains i ot mort . vii . c . et . lx . chevaliers, et neporquant ja n'i eüssent durée quant Kex li senescaus vint a tot (72 *c*) . xx . m . chevaliers et secorut mon segnor Gavains, et lors corurent sus les paiens d'Espagne et les ocisent a grans mons, parmi le camp, et n'i porent avoir durée. Lors se misent a le fuite et encontrerent le Soudan qui venoit a tot . l . mile Sarrasins, et vinrent a mon segnor Gavains et a Keu le senescal, et se combatirent des tierce desci a miedi, et tant i avoit mors es campagnes de chevaliers, et de serjans, qu'on ne pooit passer ni assambler por joste faire, mais as espées nues s'entreocioient, et bien saciés que Gavains i fist le jor tant d'armes qu'il i ocist par son cors seulement . m . et . ij . c . et . xxx . que chevaliers que serjans.

Voirs estoit que se force li croissoit puis miedi, et quant miedis fu passés si ne feri onques chevalier qu'il ne por-

fendit et lui et le ceval. Tant estoit fiers qu'on ne l'osoit atendre, et par son esfors misent li Breton a le fuite le Soudan, et lors assambla li empereres de Rome a mon segnor Gavains, qui avoit grant fais soufert, et a Keu le senescal, et estora . c . et . l . mile, et lors fu si grans le polriere que Kex li senescaus se mist a le fuite, et od lui li Breton, et Gavains les garda par derriere, et lors vint Artus a tout . lx . mile chevaliers preus et hardis, et estoit cascuns desfensables et bien armés, et assamblerent as Romains, et la ot li plus ruiste bataille que cors d'ome peüst agarder, et i ot mors d'une part et d'autre a l'assambler plus de . xiiij . mile chevaliers, et saciés que molt se prova bien li rois Artus.

(*72 d*) Atant[1] vint li emperere de Rome par les rens, molt richement armés, et s'escria: 'Rois Artus, or sui tos pres de desraisnier l'onor envers toi, et proverai que tu es mes sers.' Et Artus l'oi et poinst contre lui, et tint l'espée el puing destre, et feri l'empereor parmi le teste, et li douna tel colp a l'aie de Diu qu'il le fendi dusqu'el braier et le trebuça mort, et puis s'escria en haut que li emperere estoit mors. Atant poinst Gavains et feri le Soudan de l'espée, et le trença parmi le çaint de travers, et li rois Lot feri le roi d'Espagne d'un gavrelot parmi le pis, et l'abati mort a le terre. Et quant les Romains, et les Sarrasins, virent chair lor segnor si en furent molt espoenté, et s'en vinrent plus de . c . mile sor les cors et les en volrent aporter a lor trés, et d'autre part revinrent li Breton et li Norois et li Irois et li Escot a glaves, a dars, a misericordes, et disent qu'il emporteroient les cors des . iij .

[1] D. omits the details of the general battle, but gives more particulars as to the fight between the two monarchs, Arthur defying the emperor as traitor to Holy Church. It is obvious here that the text D. is abridging is not that of M., though no doubt both go back to the same source.

traïtors, et li Romains les volrent avoir; lors i ot tant cols ferus sor aus qu'on peust des abatus et des mors cargier . cc . cars, et bien vous di vraiement que, puis le tans Artu (Arcu) qu'assist ses bones en Ethyope, ne fu si grans ocisions. Et lors revint Gavains, et ne s'en pooit assasier et les ocioit ausi comme li leus enragiés deveure . j . agnel, et Bedivers i referoit de s'espée tant que li camp flotoient tot de sanc, et bien saciés que li Romains s'en fuiioient et laissoient le camp ester quant . xx . m. serjant se furent asamblé, (73 *a*) et i avoit chevaliers autresi, et avuec çaus demourerent li Romains, et revinrent el camp, u li cors de tant chevaliers gisoit descolorés, et empalis. Atant s'esvertuerent li Breton, et corurent sor les Romains, et Guillac, qui fu rois de Danemarce, tint l'espée el puing destre, et feri . j . Romain qui estoit plus grans des autres, si li douna tel colp qu'il le porfendi desci en le sele del ceval.

Quant li Romain virent mort celui qui les conduisoit, si en furent molt esfreé, et lors revint Artus sor aus od . xxx . mile Bretons, et cevauca par grant air, et li Breton les ocioient, et abatoient. Lors s'en fuirent li Romain et *D.* li Sarrasin, et li Breton les encaucierent molt longement, et en ocisent, et prisent tant com il volrent, et dura li cace . j . jor et une nuit, et bien saciés qu'i ot pris . xv . des senators de Rome. Et quant cele desconfiture fu faite, si prist Artus consel a ses barons et dist qu'il se volroit faire coroner a Rome, et si home li loerent qu'il cevauçast a force, et se fesist coroner a Rome. Lors fist mander Artus devant lui les senators de Rome qu'il avoit pris, et quant il furent venu devant lui si se laissierent chaoir a son pié, et li crierent merci, et qu'il les laissast vivre, et il li rendroient Rome, et seroient a son service a tos jors mais. Et Artus lor creanta cest afaire, et les reçut a homes, et lor clama se prison cuite.

c. Adonc commanda li rois que se gent s'aparellast au tierç jor, si com por aler a Rome. Le jor devant qu'Artus dut movoir si estoit el palais de Paris (73 *b*) et avuec lui Gavains ses niés, et Kex li senescaus, et Guillac li rois de Danemarce, et li rois Lot d'Orchanie. Atant descendirent . iij .[1] mesage au perron, et monterent en le sale et le saluerent de Diex. Quant Artus les vit si les recounut bien, et lor demanda: 'Segnor, por quoi estes vous ci venus? Por Diu dites moi que me feme fait, et Mordrès mes niés, ja n'ont il nule cose se bien non?' Et li mesage li respondent: 'Rois, de çou que tu nos demandes te dirons nous noveles. Saces que tes niés Mordrès a ovré encontre toi come traitres, car il a te feme espousée, et porta corone dedens le premier mois que tu departis de ton pais, et a tous les cuers des gens. Et saces que tu n'a castel qui plain ne soit d'arbalestiers et de chevaliers et de serjans, et n'i a chevalier en le terre qui contre se volenté fust qu'il ne fesist ocire, et saces qu'il a mandés les Saisnes, qui furent del parenté Engis, qui tant guerroia vostre pere, ne en toute le terre de Bretagne ne lait il canter ne messe ne matine, et bien te disons se tu ne le secors tu le perdras, et miels vous vient il vostre terre conquerre que l'autrui.'

QUANT Artus a oie ceste parole si en ot molt grant honte et molt grant ire a son cuer, et s'en consella a ses barons comment il poroit esploitier, et ce fu li somes de son consel qu'il retornast arriere, et requesist son païs, et se il peüst prendre Mordret qu'il le fesist ardoir, et mesire Gavains li loa, qui estoit ses frere, et li rois Lot d'Orchanie ses pere, qui molt en avoit grant honte.

Quant Artus oi cel consel si le tint a buen, et len-

[1] . iiij . rois.

demain cevauca, et se cevalerie avuec lui, et vinrent en Normendie, et entrerent en mer, et Mordrès, qui se venue *D. 125* sot par ses espies qu'il avoit od le roi, lors assambla Saisnes et serjans et chevaliers, et vint a le rive encontre Artu, et lors vint li rois Artus por ariver, et Mordrès vint por desfendre, et saciés qu'a l'ariver ot grant peril, et mesire Gavains vint por ariver a tout . xx . m. homes, et saciés qu'il avoit molt grant honte de le traison que Mordrès avoit faite. Atant volt ariver, mais ses frere li fu au devant a tot . l . mile Saisnes, et jeterent espiels contre les Bretons, et pieres et lances et dars, et li Breton ausi contre aus, et saciés qu'a Gavain i meschai, car il n'avoit pas son hiaume lacié, et uns Saisnes tenoit . j . aviron et en feri Gavain el cief, et l'abati mort.

Quant Gavains fu mors ce fu molt grans dolors. Ahi Dex, com grant damage del buen justicier! Il estoit buens cevaliers, et biaus et loiaus et sages, et estoit droiturniers en jugement, et savoit bel parler. Dex, com grant dolor quant il le covint morir! Dont oïssiés si grant plor en le nef qu'on les oist de . ij . liues loing. La fu ocis Saigremors, et Bedivers, et Kex li senescaus. La finirent li cors de tant preudomes, et saciés que de . xx . m. chevaliers n'en escapa piés qui tot ne fussent ocis u noié, et meisme li nés u il estoient (73 *d*) fu depecie en . c . quartiers, et afondra en le mer.

Quant Artus sot que li . xx . m. estoient peri si fu molt dolans, et quant il sot la verité que Gavains estoit ocis si en ot si grant iror et si grant duel qui li cuers li fali, et chai en le nef, et se pasma plus de . xv . fois, et lors l'en releverent li Breton, mais bien vous puis dire que nus n'oi onques ausi grant duel que li rois Lot demena por Gavain son fil. Fisent lor estoire ariver, et li rois Artus autresi, et prisent le port a force, et issirent des nés, mais molt en i ot

d'ocis, ançois qu'il eüssent pris terre, et lor revint grant mescaance Artu, car, si comme li rois Lot issoit de le nef, si traist uns serjans a lui et le feri d'un quarel parmi le pis. Lors fu grans li plors sor le cors. Atant si rasamblerent li Saisne, et recorurent sus Artu. Mais, puis que li Breton furent as cevaus, si corurent sus les Saisnes, et en ocisent molt, car il estoient molt airé sor aus. Tot ensement com li leus famelleus deveure l'agnel si les devoroient li Breton, et tant en ocisent que li mont en gisoient parmi les cans, et Dex dona as Bretons la victoire, et desconfirent les Saisnes, et Mordrès s'en torna fuiant, et vint a ses castiaus qu'il avoit garnis, et volt ens entrer. Mais quant li borjois et li chevaliers sorent qu'Artus revenoit, et qu'il l'avoit desconfit, si li veerent lor fortereces.

Quant Mordrès vit qu'il ne poroit entrer es castiaus, si en fu molt dolans et ot paor, et s'en ala en Wincestre, et manda les Saisnes de par tote (74 *a*) le terre, et dist qu'il atendra Artu a bataille. Et quant Artus le seut, si fu molt dolans, et vint a le rive, et i fist prendre Gavains, et Kex le senescal et Bediver et Saigremor et le roi Lot d'Orchanie, et les fist enterrer. Et lors s'esmut a tot le remanant de se gent, et sivi Mordret par les castiaus, et uns mesage li dist qu'il estoit a Guincestre atout grans gens, et quant Artus le sot si cevauça cele part, et manda les barons de tot son pais et les borjois et les citeains, et il i vinrent. Et quant il furent venu si se clamerent a lui de Mordret qu'ensi lor avoit destruis et honis. Quant Artus les entendi si en fu molt dolans, si qu'il ne lor pot respondre. Et tant tost fist monter ses chevaliers, et lors cevauca tant qu'il vint a Guincestre, et quant Mordrès sot se venue si issi encontre lui, et dist que ja en castel ne se muçera car il avoit forçor gent qui li rois n'eüst. Et lors furent aparellié de combatre, et s'entrecorurent sus molt ruiste-

ment, d'une part et d'autre, et la veissiés le plus fier estor del monde, et veissiés cevaliers et serjans gesir tos mors a le terre dont on peüst cargier . xxx . cars, et tant i ot mors de Saisnes que petit en i remest. Et Mordrès s'en torna fuiant grant aleure a tot le remanant de se gent, et s'enfui en Yrlande, et passa le pais et tant qu'il vint en une ille u estoit uns rois paiens Saisnes, et estoit del parenté Engis, *D.* et cil le retint volentiers et molt l'ama por çou qu'il estoit buens cevaliers.

(74 *b*) Quant Artus sot que Mordrès estoit en Yrlande si le sivi grant aleüre, et tant cevauca qu'il vint en le terre u il estoit. Quant li rois qui Saisnes estoit sot se venue si manda se gent, et vint encontre lui, et lors s'entrecorurent sus, et saciés que forment hairent li Breton les Saisnes, et li Saisne les Bretons, et por çou si en i ot assés plus mors. Molt dura li bataille longement, et molt i ot mors de buens chevaliers, mais de tous çaus qui i morurent ne parole pas li livres, mais tant vos puis je bien dire que Mordirs (*sic*) i fu ocis, et li rois Saisnes qui l'avoit retenu, et si fu li rois Artus navrés a mort, car il fu ferus d'une lance parmi le pis, et lors mena on grant duel entor Artu, et Artus lor dist : 'Laissiés ester le duel, car je ne morrai pas. Je me ferai porter en Avalon por mes plaies meciner a Morghain me seror.'

Ensi se fist Artus porter en Avalon,et dist a ses gens qu'il l'atendissent et qu'il revenroit, et li Breton revinrent a Carduel, et l'atendirent plus de . xl . ans, ains qu'il fesissent roi, car li cuidoient tos dis qu'il revenist. Mais tant saciés vous que li auquant l'ont puis veü es forès cacier, et ont oi ses chiens avuec lui, et li auquant i ont eü esperance lonc tans qu'il revenist. Et quant tot cest afaire furent akievé si s'en vint Merlins[1] a Blayse, et li conta ces coses tot ensi com

[1] Morguen.

eles furent avenues. Quant Blayse ot fait sen escrit si l'en aporta chiés Perceval qui le Graal gardoit; et estoit (74 *c*) de si sainte vie qui li Sains Esperis descendist a lui sovent, et li conta tout l'aventure Artu, tot si com il estoit ravis en Avalon, et comment Gavains estoit ocis, et comment le chevalier de le table reonde avoient finé lor tans. Quant Perceval l'entendi si en plora por le pitié qu'il en ot, et pria Nostre Segnor qu'il eüst pitié de lor ames, car il les avoit molt amés. Et lors vint Merlins a Perceval, et a Blayse son maistre, et prist congié a els, et lor dist que Nostre Sire ne voloit qu'il se demostrast au peule, ne il ne porent morir devant le finement del siecle: 'Mais adont arai jou la joie parmenable, et je volrai faire defors te maison .j. abitacle, et la volrai converser, et si profetiserai çou que Nostre Sire me commandera, et tot cil qui mon abitacle verront si le clameront l'esplumeor Merlin.'

Atant s'en torna Merlins, et fist son esplumoir, et entra dedens, ne onques puis au siecle ne fu veüs. Ne de Merlin ne del Graal ne parole plus li contes, fors tant seulement que Merlins pria Nostre Segnor qu'il fesist a tos çaus merci qui volentiers oroient son livre, et qui le feroient escrire por ramembrer ses ouevres, et vous en dites tout. AMEN.[1]

(*Ici fine li romans de Merlin et del Graal.*)

[1] As noted above the text makes no pretensions to being a 'critical' text, simply a correct copy of the MS. I have added punctuation and accents, and corrected certain mis-spellings of ordinary words. Where words are obviously lacking, I have made no attempt to supply them. The form of certain proper names is interesting; Bediver, for instance, would give our English form Bedivere, and we have both Quincestre and Wincestre.

'DIDOT' MS., FO. 93 VO.

Quant Artus fust sacrez et la messe fust chantée si issirent tuit li baron hors del mostier et ne virent point del perron ne ne sorent qu'il fust devenuz. Et einsint fust Artus esleuz et sacrez a rois et tint la terre et le regne lonc tans molt amplez (*sic*). Quant il fust coroneez et l'en li ot fait toutes ses droitures si l'en menerent a son pais (*sic*) et Key le seneschal aveuc lui et autres barons une grant partie qui estoient illuec assemblez por voir qui l'espée porroit del perron arrachier, et quant l'esleccion fust faite einsint come vous avez oi si vint M. a la cort. Et quant li barons qui Uterpendragons avoint (*sic*) servi le virent, si en orent grant ioie, et firent grant feste de lui. Et M. vint oiant touz et lor dit: 'Seygnors, il est bien droiz que je vous faz sages qui est cil que vous avez fait rois, par l'esleccion de Nostre Seygnor. Sachiez que il est fiz au roi Uterpendragon nostre seygnor lige, et enz en la nuit que il fust neez le me fist il baillier, et je l'en chargie a norrir a Antor por ce que je le savoie prodome et loial, et il li norri volentiers por le grant bien que je le dis qu'il en auroit, et einsint tot com je le dis si l'ai il veü, quar il fait de son fiz seneschal de sa terre'; et Artus dit: 'Ce ai mon et touz les iorz que je vivrai l'en tendron nos a seneschal et a seygnor de quant que j'ai.' A iceste parole ont molt grant bruit et grant ioie demené touz li barons del pais et meismes misires Gauveis (*sic*) qui fiz estoit au roi Lot.

Après ce a li rois comandé mestre les tables et einsi fist

et s'asistrent tretuit a mengier par mi la sale et orent tuit a foison quant que il demanderent, et quant il orent mengié si leverent et otroierent au roi et le traistrent a part et li distrent: 'Sire veez ci M. qui fust li bons devins vostre pere, et vostre pere l'aima molt. et M. fist la table ronde en son tens, et si fust cil meismes qui a Uterpendragon dit sa mort. Mes or guardez qui (*sic*) soit molt enorez.' Et Artus si respont, 'Beaus Sygnors si sera il.' Lors vint li rois a M. et li sist delez lui et fist grant fest de sa venue. Après mengier en apele li rois M. et li dit sa volenté et molt l'enora au souper (*sic*), et M. li dit: 'Sire je palleroi molt volontiers a vous en conseil et si ait aveuc vous . ij . de vos barons en qui plus vous vous fiez,' et li rois dit: 'M. je ferai molt volentiers quant que vous voudrez de bien.' Li rois apela Key le seneschal et mon seygnor Gauvein son neveu a une part. Lors furent tuit . iiij . a un conseil et dit M.: 'Artus vous estes rois la Deu merci et Uterpendragons vostre pere fust molt prodons et la table ronde fust faite en son tens que fust contrefait a la table que Ioseph estora de par le Graal quant il desevales (*sic*) bons des mauveis. Or sachiez qu'il a eu . ij . rois en Bretaigne qui ont esté rois de France et ont conquis Rome sor les Romains et se sunt fait coroner. Et . c . anz ainz que vous fussiez rois (*sic*) prophetizerent li prophete vostre venue, et sachiez que la reine Sibile prophetiza et dit que vous seriez le tierz hons qui rois en seroit, et après le dit Salemon, et je le tierz qui le vous dit, et puis que li sors en est getez et seuz si soiez si preuz et si vaillant que la table ronde soit essauciée par vous et sachiez que ja empereres ne serez de ci atant que la table ronde soit essauciée par vous si come je vous diroi. Il avint jadis que li Graaus fust bailliez a Joseph que Nostre Sires li dona meismes quant il fust en prison. Et Joseph par le commendement Nostre Seygnor

s'en ala en . j . desert, et amena aveuc lui une grant partie de pueple de la terre de Judee, qui obeirent a son commendement, et au servise Nostre Seygnor, et tant qu'il furent bien si orent la grace Nostre Seygnor, et quant il furent autrement si lor desfailli. Et li chevaliers qui estoient lor meistre si furent molt dolant, et proierent Nostre Seygnor que il lor feist demostrance de ce que le pueple demandoient. Et Nostre Seygnor li comanda que il feist une table ou lieu de cele ou Il avoit si, et einsi come la voiz de Nostre Seygnor li comanda il le fist. Et i asist une grant partie de son pueple et plus en i ot qui ne porent seoir que de ceus qui issistrent, et tant que . j . lieus voit en sinifiance del leu dont Judas s'osta quant Nostre Seygnor dit qu'il le traïssoit. Et Moyses, . j . faux deciples qui le porseut ententa (*sic*) en maintes manieres vint devant Joseph, et li dit que il le leissast ce lieu amplir, et dit que il sentoit tant de la grace Nostre Seygnor que bien estoit dignes de seoir ou leu voit. Et Joseph dit que si l'en creoit qu'il ne si asseroit mie. Et cil li dit si vraiement come il estoit bons li donast ou leu asseir, et Joseph dit : 'Vous isserreiz, (*sic*) Lors vint Moyses a leu et assist et si tost come il fust assis il fundi enbisme (*sic*), dont il ne sordra iusqu'a au tens a l'entecrist. Nostre Sire fist la premiere table, Joseph fist la seconde, et je, au tens Uterpendragons vostre pere, fis la tierce, qui molt sera encore essauciée et pallera l'on par tot de la chevalerie qui issera. Or sachez qui (*sic*) le Graaus qui fust baillıez a Iosep est en ce pais, et en la guarde au riche Roi Pescheor, a qui Joseph le bailla par le commendement Nostre Seygnor quant il dut fenir, et cil Rois Pescheors est en grant enfermetez, quar il est veil (*sic*) home, et plains de maladies, ne il n'aura yames santé devant uns chevaliers que ya a la table ronde assera sera prodons vers Deu, et vers Sainte eglise, et ait tant fait d'armes qu'il soit le plus alosez del monde,

et lors vendra a la maison au riche Roi Pescheor, et quant il aura demandé de quoi li Graaus sert, tantost sera li rois garis de sa fermeté, (*sic*) et cherront li enchentement de Bretaigne, et sera la prophecie acomplie. Or sachiez que se vous le faites einsi que grans biens t'en porra avenir, et si me covendra aler quar je ne puis mie sovent demostrer au pueple.' Et lor dit Artus que se il voloit demorer qui l'ameroit molt. Et M. dit ce ne porroit mie or estre, 'Mais je ne revendre (*sic*) encores a vous.' Et li rois li dit, 'M. je voil qu'il soit a vostre volenté de ce.' Einsi departi li rois, et M. s'en ala en Ortoberlande a Blaise son mestre, et li conta ces choses et M. quant il les ot contées Blaises les mist en escrit et par son escrit les savon nos encore. Et Artus remaint aveuc ses barons, et pensa molt en ce que M. li avoit dit, et sachiez que oncques rois ausi grant corz ne tint come fist Artus, ne il ne fust oncques rois qui tant se feist amer a ses barons come il fist, et il estoit li plus biaux hons, et le meillors chevaliers de son cors que l'en seüst, et por ce qu'il estoit si vaillans rois, et por son bele acointement, et por son biaux paller, et por les beaux dons que il donoit fust il si renomez que home ne pallot (*sic*) par tot le monde fors solement del roi Artus si que tote chevalerie reperoit a sa cort por lui veoir et por son bel acointement et home ne prisot (*sic*) chevalerié que nus hons feist et il n'eust esté del meigniee au riche roi Artus, a ce que il estoit par tout de si haut pris, et de si haut afaire que il estoit par tot le monde renomez. En cel tens estoit le fiz Alein le Gros donc vous avez oï paller ça en arrieres petit enfes, et ot non Percevaux, et Alein estoit molt maladis tant qu'il en mori. Atant s'aparust la voiz del Saint Esperit et li dit: 'Alein le Gros sachez que tu est pres de ta fin et vendras par tens en la compagnie Ihu · Crist, et si te mande que Brons ton pere est molt prodons, et molt sent de la

grace Nostre Seygnor, et est conversez en ces illes d'Illande, (*sic*) et aveuc lui le vesseaux Ioseph que l'on apele Graal ; et Nostre Sires veut que tu saches qui (*sic*) ne porra passer de vie a mort devant que ton fiz que tu as de ta fame l'ait trové et que il ait comandée la grace de son vessel, et aprises les secroites paroles que Ioseph li aprist ; et lors sera gariz de son fermetez (*sic*), et lors vendra a la grant ioie son pere qu'il a touz iorz servi. Et je coment a ton fiz qui (*sic*) s'envoit a la cort a celui roi que l'en apele rois, Artus et la aprandra teles novelles par quoi il vandra a la maison son aiol le riches Rois Pescheors. Quant Aleins oït la voiz du Saint Esperit si tendi ses mains vers le ciel et basti sa coupe et après devia et morust, et Nostre Sires qu'il avoit servi l'en recroi (*sic*) a gloriose merite com il avoit deservi en icest siecle. Et lors dit a Percevaux son fiz qu'il alast a la cort le roi Artus, et Percevaux ne seura mie einz monta . j . ior sor . j . chaceor que il avoit et chevaucha tant par . j . bois et par . j . forez qu'il vint a la cort au roi Artus, et vint devant lui, et li demanda armes ; et li rois Artus le restint molt volentiers et li dona armes et fust puis molt ainz (*sic*) a la cort.

Here D. begins another section with an illuminated capital.

I have given the above exactly as it stands, without any attempt to correct even obvious errors, as I wished to show the relations of the texts : D. is about as bad as a copy can be, M., on the contrary, extremely correct and careful.

PROSE TRISTAN

B.N. 103. FRANÇ.

Fo. 298. vo. Or dit le compte que le Roy Artus tenoit a une Penthecouste moult riche cort a Carduel en Gales. Tous ses haulx barons y furent venus, et les compagnons de la Table Ronde. Apres la messe assist le Roy les compaignons de la Table Ronde que Merlin avoit faite. Si y demoura ung lieu wyt pour la signifiance du lieu ou Judas sist avec les appostres au jour de la Cêne quand il tray Nostre Segnor. Si demoura son lieu wit. Et aussi avoit fait Merlin ung lieu wit a la table qu'il avoit faicte. Et pour ce n'y osa le Roy asseoir nulluy.

Moult fu la feste grant, car tous les compaignons de la Table Roonde vestirent robes royaulx aussi comme s'ilz fussent roys. Et le Roy Artus porta couronne, et l'enchenchoit on partout ou il aloit. Le Roy commanda que tous ceulz qui estoient venus a sa cort fussent vestus de draps d'un semblant, si fu fait puis qu'il ot commandé. Et sachiés que le Roy douna ce jour robes a six mille trois cens personnes.

Atant laverent tous, et assisterent a disgner. Le Roy servi ceulx de la Table Ronde, la couronne en chief, si fu moult regardé de ceulx qui onques ne l'avoient veu. Après mengier y issirent tous aux champs pour bouhourder. Lors montent sur les murs dames et damoiselles pour veoir le bouhourdeys, si s'en penoient plus les chevaliers de bien

faire. Car poy y en avoit qui n'y eust s'amye. Si emporterent le prix ceulx de la Table Roonde de celle journee.

Illeuq fu la fille le Roy Loth d'Orcanie, la plus belle damoiselle du monde, qui avoit nom Helaine, et avoit regardé le bouhourdeys avecques les autres damoiselles, et regarda Percheval qui trop bien l'avoit fait, et il estoit trop beaux, si l'ama trop Helaine pour la beaulté de lui. Aprés le bouhourdeys commencerent les dames et les damoiselles les caroles, et a faire feste, mais Helaine pensa moult a Percheval.

Les chevaliers quant il fut nuit s'alerent en leurs hostelz, et en leurs tentes; Helaine envoya a Percheval ung sien varlet, et lui manda qu'elle le verroit volentiers jouster a ceulx de la Table Roonde, si lui pria qu'il s'armast d'unes armes qu'elle luy envoieroit, et qu'il portast se manche pour l'amour d'elle. Quant Percheval entendi le message si lui fist grant feste, et lui dist, 'Amy, dites a ma damoiselle grant mercis, et tout ainsi comment elle commande sera fait.' Et la damoiselle, qui moult en fu liés, prinst les armes, et les envoya a Percheval, qui les prinst, et en fist grant feste.

A landemain ala le Roy oir messe, et tous les barons, puis revindrent au palais. L'eaue fu cornee, puis assistrent au mengier. Apres mengier issirent les chevaliers pour bouhourder, les dames et les damoiselles montent sur les murs pour voir le bouhourdeis. Helaine, la sœur Messire Gauvain y vint pour voir jouster Percheval contre ceulx de la Table Roonde. Atant es vous venir Percheval au bouhourdeis, la damoiselle le vit si en fu moult liée. Si demanderent tous qui le chevalier au blanc escu estoit, le Roy meismes le regardoit volentiers, car trop estoit bel en armes. Percheval leisse courre a Saigremor, si s'entrefierent si que les lances volent en pieces, et Percheval le hurta si

de corps et de pis qu'il le fist voler a terre si estourdi qu'il cuida bien estre mort. Et Percheval vint a Helaine et lui presente le cheval, et dit, 'Damoiselle vostre chevalier vous presente cest cheval.' 'Sire,' fait elle, 'vostre mercy.' Et lors s'en retorna et jousta a Herec le filz Lac, et le porta a terre.

Si dist le compte que Percheval surmonta tous ceulx de la Table Roonde qui la estoient, et emporta le prix, si que tous distrent qu'il estoit le meilleur chevalier du royaume de Logres. Lors vint le Roy Artus a Percheval, et dit, 'Sire, vostre mercy quant vous estes venu a ma feste, or vous prie que vous soiés de mon hostel, et de mon conseil.' 'Sire, dist Percheval · le vostre mercy!' Lors oste Percheval son heaume, et l'a recongneu le Roy, si luy fait trop grant joye, et lui pardouna son mautalent, et aussi firent Saigremor, Herec, et tous les autres de la Table Roonde qu'il avoit abatus. Après ce dit Percheval au roy qu'il empliroit volentiers le lieu de la Table Roonde qui estoit wyt. Et le Roy lui dit, 'Percheval mon amy, si vous m'en creés vous ne vous asserrés nye en lieu, car grans maulx vous en pourront venir, et a moy, et a ceulx de la Table Roonde.' Lors lui conta comme Moys, le faulx disciple Joseph. fu fondu a la table Joseph, et comment Merlin lui avoit desfendu ce lieu que nul ne s'i asseist. Et quant Percheval oÿ ce si ne prisa riens quanque le Roy lui dit, ains lui dit, 'Sire, se vous me voulés desfendre la compaingnie de la Table Roonde je m'en ÿroÿ, si que ne me verrés jamais!'

Quant le Roy l'oÿ, si en fut moult courouchié, mais tant lui pria Gauvain et Mordret, que le Roy Artus lui octroya.

Lors vont les barons a la Table Roonde, et s'assist, chascun en son lieu, si en demoura ung wyt, Percheval

vint au lieu wyt, si se saingne, et s'assist, et tantost la pierre fendi, et la terre brait si durement qu'il sembla a tous qu'ilz fondissent en abisme, et y oult si grant fumee qu'ilz ne s'entrevirent de grant piéce. Après vint une vois qui dist, 'Roys Artus, tu as fait la plus grant mesprison qu'oncques Roy feist en la terre de Bretaingne, car tu as trespassé le commandement que Merlin t'avoit fait. Et saches que Percheval qui ce a fait en encherra en la plus grant peine, qu'onques hom en chaist, et tous ceulx de la Table Roonde avec lui. Et se ne fust pour l'amour de Helain le Gros son pere, que Dieu aimme, il mourust d'aussi doulerouse mort comme fist Moys qui s'assist en lieu wyt de la table Joseph qui lui avoit desfendu.

Et sachiés, Roys Artus, que le Saint Graal, qui est en la maison le Roy Pescheur, est a moult grant meschief, car le Roy Pescherres est en une maladie dont il ne garira pas devant que ung chevalier de la Table Roonde aura tant fait d'armes qu'il soit le plus alosés du monde, et que nul ne soit plus preudoms que lui.

Et quant il sera si parfait, et il pourra aler en la maison le Roy Pescheur, et il aura demandé de la Lance et du Graal qui on en sert, et on lui aura raconté et dit le pourquoy, si sera tantost le Roy garis, et ressoudra la pierre qui fendi dessoulz les piés Percheval. Et lors fauldront tous les enchantemens qui sont en la terre de Bretaingne.'

Et quant les barons oyrent ce si se saingnerent, a merveilles, et distrent que jamais ne fineroient devant qu'ilz auroient trouvé la maison au Roy Pescheur, et demandé qui on sert du Saint Graal. Et Percheval si s'en parti, et dit aussi, et part de court, et s'en va sans nul congié, car il ne voloit que nul sceüst ou il aloit. Si chevaucha tant qu'il herberga la nuit chieux ung hermite qui lui demanda s'il estoit chevalier? 'Sire, dit Percheval,

Oyl.' 'Ha, Sire, dit l'hermite, pleust a Dieu que vous fussiés le chevalier que Merlin me dit une fois.' 'Et que vous dit il?' fait Percheval. 'Il me dit, fait l'Hermite, que je ne mourroye devant que Percheval le filz le Roy Pellinor de Listernois me vendroit veir!' 'Veistes vous dont Merlin?' fait Percheval. 'Oyl, Sire, et fu moult mon acointe.' 'Ha, Sire, fait Percheval, se vous savés riens de lui si le me dites!' 'Volentiers,' dit l'Hermite.

There then follows an account of Merlin's feats as a child: and how, before his death, he had entrusted the hermit with a book, which was to be given to Perceval. All this section is taken from the romance of *The Prophesies of Merlin*, which is sometimes found attached to the 'Borron' *Merlin*, *i.e* in the same position as that occupied by our two versions of the prose *Perceval*.

CHAPTER II

THE POEMS OF ROBERT DE BORRON

As indicated in the previous chapter the problems before us are two-fold: we have to determine, first, the immediate source of the text, whether it be the mise-en-prose of Borron's *Queste* poem or not; second, whence the author, be he Borron or another, derived his material.

The determination is in neither case easy; as we saw above, scholars have expressed themselves in very contradictory fashion; so far, however, and this must be clearly borne in mind, their opinion has been based rather on the ground of general probability than in that of minute and critical investigation of the text. It was fairly obvious that, whatever the original form of the prose *Perceval*, the Didot MS. only represented that form imperfectly, being condensed and abridged to the point of incoherence.

Yet although to many the version, as we knew it, did not approve itself as the logical conclusion of the scheme formulated by Borron in his *Joseph*, yet *a priori* there were strong reasons for believing he must have completed his work. Had he left his Grail trilogy uncompleted we should be confronted with the extraordinary phenomenon of the failure of no fewer than three writers, Chrétien de Troyes, Wauchier de Denain, and Robert de Borron to achieve an identical task, and we should have to ask what was the peculiar fatality which, apparently, attended every effort to

write a *Perceval-Grail* poem?[1] We know on later evidence that Chrétien's work was interrupted by death; Wauchier's literary career, as sketched by M. Paul Meyer,[2] affords reasonable ground for supposing that he may have discarded the *Perceval* as the result of a change of patron. But we can cite neither of these reasons for Borron's supposed failure; rather the fact that, throughout the later and enormously expanded development of the Arthurian cycle, Borron is constantly cited, in conjunction with Map, as the main authority, renders it practically certain that his share in the evolution of that cycle can have been no unimportant one; if there were no *Queste* version from his hand, it becomes extremely difficult to understand why, in the final development of the cycle, when the Quest becomes of overwhelming importance, his authority should be so frequently appealed to.[3]

So far the only work on the subject which has taken the *M* text into consideration is Hoffmann's short inaugural

[1] The theory formerly advanced by critics, that Chrétien and Wauchier alike left their work unfinished because they did not understand the matter with which they were dealing, must be dismissed as untenable. Writers of that, or indeed any, period, did not, and do not, start elaborate romances upon a theme which they themselves comprehend so imperfectly that they are unable to control the progress of incident. Authors of experience, as were these two, can bring their work to a coherent end; whether that end were the intention of their source or not would be immaterial. There is very little room for doubt that the source of Chrétien's Perceval, and of Wauchier's *Grail* sections, was in each instance a completed poem.

[2] *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, vol. xxxii.

[3] Cf. Prologue to MS. B. N. 112; fonds Franç. cited by Wechssler, *Ueber die verschiedenen Redaktionen des Robert von Borron zugeschriebenen Gral-Lancelot Cyklus*, p. 57; also *Le Saint Graal*, vol. i. p. 58, for the supposed collaboration between Borron and Map, and note iii. p. 156.

dissertation, referred to in the previous chapter.[1] The writer had before him a copy of the Modena MS., and bases his criticism on the evidence of our two versions, *D* and *M*. His decision is that there is no evidence of a verse[2] original. Here, as indeed at almost every point throughout the study, which is, unfortunately, of a very superficial description, I differ from him. When preparing my copy for the press I was struck, in many passages, by the rhythmic character of the prose; also by the fact that certain variants in the spelling seemed to point to an earlier verse-form—*e.g.*, *D*. speaking of the hero's relation to the Fisher King, always uses the word *aiol*, *M*. *taion*, or *taions*, which rhymes with *Bron*, *Brons*. The title is sometimes Roi Pesch*iére*, sometimes Pesche*or*; in the former case we find close to it in the text *frére* or *pére*, in the latter *cort*. A word like *saciés* will be written with or without the *i*, as demanded by the length of the verse. It seemed to me that a careful and minute examination of the text might yield good results. I, therefore, worked the romance over, incident by incident, and submitted the result to M. Bédier, whose competence to decide such a question no one will dispute. For certain sections of the prose M. Bédier held that a verse original was clearly discernible; for others, it was doubtful. On the whole, the evidence was not sufficiently decisive to admit of a general affirmation, while it was strong enough to forbid a verdict in the negative.

At the same time I recognised that M. Bédier was fixing a high standard of versification, and one to which Borron's genuine work did not conform. I thought it well, therefore, to examine the versification of the *Joseph* and *Merlin*

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 6.

[2] 'Es lassen sich keine Beweise dafür erbringen dass *PP.* die Prosa-Auflosung eines Versromans ist,' *op. cit.* p. 6.

poems, as a previous knowledge of the methods adopted in the genuine work would aid us to determine whether the reconstructed passages were, or were not, by the same hand.

The result was very curious; verb rhymes are, admittedly, not a very sure basis of comparison,[1] but for this particular form of rhyme Borron shows an overwhelming partiality. The printed edition gives twenty-four lines to the page; on six pages, taken at haphazard, the number of verb rhymes was respectively 16, 17, 14, 20, 16, 15. Four more pages gave 17, 13, 18, 18; an average of rather over sixteen lines in twenty-four, *i.e.* more than two-thirds of Borron's rhymes are verb rhymes. Throughout he allows himself a latitude excessive even for English verse, and perfectly astounding from a French standard. Thus he does not hesitate to rhyme *uit* with *ist*—

Et a eus tous Hebrons a dist[2]
Mi fil, mes filles, estes vous tuit. 3237-38.

Cele chose nous a plus nuit
Que quidons que plus nous vaussist. 3547-48.

At one moment we have

La fame fu toute esbah*ie*
Quant ele ha la parole o*ie*. 1513-14

the next he does not scruple to write

Quant Petrus Joseph paller *oit*
Si li dist que pas ne quid*oit*. 3205-6.

Saint Esperit is written indifferently *it* or *ist*, as the rhyme

[1] Any prose passage of which several lines are in the same tense might provide us with a certain number of rhymes.

[2] Quoted from Franc. Michel's edition, Bordeaux, 1841.

may require; *messagier* rhymes at one time with *touchier*, at another with *avantier*; we have *femme* rhyming with *âme*, and even *feire* with *memoire*—

> Einsi prist Ennemis a feire
> Homme de sens et de memoire. 3699-700.

while certain of his lines defy scansion:

> Seisiz fu li Riches Peschierres
> Dou Graal, et touz commanderés. 3431-32.

or

> Quant li preudons set qu'ensi va
> Que sa femme ainsi s'estranla
> Tel duel ha qu'a peu qu'il n'enrage. 3801-3.

After which the reader will probably rejoice to be spared any more specimens.

Now, when we are dealing with a poet of this calibre, it is evident that if the prose yields a number of verses perfect in structure, those verses can hardly be Borron's; on the other hand, such lines as his could without difficulty be put together from almost any prose text; considerations which would seem to exclude the hope of a definite solution. But there is another possibility to be borne in mind; Borron may, in certain sections at least of his work, have drawn upon poems composed by more expert versifiers, in which case those sections of the story would yield better results. In any case the Modena MS. gives a very good prose version, clear, easy, and correct, immeasurably superior in every way to the Didot, and though at moments the copyist seems to have followed the verse form very closely, at others he has obviously altered and rearranged the order of the phrases

I would here suggest to the readers of this study that,

before they go further, they should, as a preliminary to the examination of the proposed reconstruction, study afresh the results obtained from a comparison of the *Joseph* and *Merlin* prose and verse forms, given by Professor Birch-Hirschfeld in chapter v. of his *Grail Studies*. I think it will be found that the relation there proved to exist between the versions corresponds remarkably with the general results of my study.

With these introductory remarks we may begin the study of our text. The opening section, previous to the arrival of Perceval at court, and the account of the great feast held by Arthur, is rather to be considered as an introductory and explanatory preface, devised with the view of bringing the *Perceval* story into correct relation with the preceding *Joseph* and *Merlin*. In neither of our MSS. is there any break, the story proceeds consecutively from the point of Arthur's election, but the *M.* text shows a break at the word *aemplir*, on p. 16 and commences the account of the feast at Pentecost with a large illuminated capital, it is really here that the action of the story begins. There are indications of a verse source in the introductory section; Merlin's address to Arthur was probably in rhyme, but it is only here and there that lines can be recovered; the address of the barons yields better results, it probably ran somewhat thus—

'Sire, honerés molt Merlins
Car ce fu li buens devins
Uter Pendragons, vostre pere,
Qui la Table Ronde fist faire.
Gardés qu'il soit molt onerés,
Car vous ne li demanderés
Ja cose qu'il ne vous dira.'
Artus respondi, si fera. (cf. p. 10, ll. 14-19.)

The passage concerning the founding of the Round Table was also in verse, as was that relating to the three kings of Britain—

> Et emperere en sera,
> Et a force la conquerra.
>
> Je vous di com jou ai pooir
> Les coses a venir savoir.
>
> Devant çou que vous fussies nés (p. 11, ll. 8-12.)
> Si fu le sors sor vous jetés.

Here I think the ultimate source is a verse chronicle, it is beyond any doubt, as we shall eventually see, that the *Mort Artus* section is derived from a rhymed version analogous to, but not, that of Wace. The conclusion I have come to, after a careful study of the texts, is that the pseudo-historic Arthur tradition has played a far more important part in the construction of this group of romances than we have hitherto realised. It seems to me that Borron's imagination had been captured by the romantic aspect of the Arthurian story, and that the task he set himself was not merely the composition of a Grail romance, but the incorporation of an already existing Grail romance with an Arthurian historic cycle. It is, of course, possible that he originally had other intentions, that he did really propose to trace minutely the history of the Grail, and its keepers; in actual fact what happened was that the Grail became subordinate to the Arthurian tradition, that Perceval was overshadowed by Arthur, and that the mysteries of the Fisher King yielded in importance to the mysteries of Merlin and the glory of Arthur's triumphant progress and mysterious departure. The source of Borron's Arthur sections has disappeared, but I think we shall find eventually

that it accounted for even more than the quite disproportionate *Mort Artus*. If the passage on pp. 13-14 where, after the departure of Merlin, the glories of Arthur's court are enlarged upon, be compared with the following quotation from Wace, I think we shall find reason to decide that even at this early stage, Borron was following his chronicle source.

N'estoit pas tenus por cortois
Escos, ne Bretons, ne François,
Normant, Angevin, ne Flamenc,
Ne Borgignon, ne Loherenc,
De qui que il tenist son feu
Des Occidant dusqu'a Mont Geu,
Qui a la cort le roi n'alast
Et qui od lui n'i sejornast ;
Et qui n'avoient vestéure,
Et contenance et arméure,
A la guise que cil estoient
Qui en la cort Artus servoient.
De plusors terres i venoient
Cil qui pris et honor queroient,
Tant por oïr ses cortesies,
Tant por veir ses mananties,
Tant por conoistre ses barons,
Tant por aveir ses rices dons,

Brut, Vol. ii. p. 75.

I should be inclined to refer all the passages treating of Arthur and his court, and probably much of what is told concerning Merlin, to this source.

In Merlin's account of the Grail there are distinct traces of a verse original:

Que Nostre Sire li porta ;
Et cil Joseph si s'en entra
En un desert . . .
. . . . . (p. 11, ll. 18-20.)

En fu dolans, et s'en ala
Devant son vaissel et pria (*Ib.* 25, 24.)

U Nostre Sire avoit sis :
Un faus deciples, o non Moys,
Qui molt sovent les essaia,
En plusors maniéres tempta,
Vint a Joseph, pria por Diu
Li laissast aemplir cel liu,
Car tant de la grasse sentoit
Que dignes del seir estoit. (p. 12, ll. 5-10.)

Saciés que Nostre Sire fist
La premiere Table, et Joseph fist
La seconde, et iou au tans
Vostre pere, Uter Pendragons,
Fist faire la tierce, qui molt sera
Essaucié, et parlera
Par tot le monde . . . (*Ib.* ll. 16-19.)
. . . . . .
Li douna li Rois Peschierres
(Le gouvernance) de ses freres.[1]

En ceste terre, de Judee,
Car Nostre Sire l'à commandé

En ces illes vers Occidant,
En cest pais arrivé sont

Converse en ces illes d'Irlande
En un des plus biaus lius del monde.

Qu'il pora venir a le cort
Le rice Roi Pescheor.

---

[1] Cf. Borron :

Biaus douz niés chevetains serez,
Et vos freres gouvernerez,

De vie a mort trespassera ·
Cil chevaliers le Sanc ara,
De Jesus Christ, et lors charront
De Bretagne li encantement.
Adont sera la prophesie
Joseph, tote par acomplie. (*Ib.* l. 13, p. 14, l. 15.)

I have here endeavoured in no way to force the lines, the rhymes are in the text, and I do not think that the occurrence of such forms as Peschi*ere*, *frere*, Pesche*or*, *cort*, can be accidental; moreover we shall find that a similar reconstruction is possible whenever the Grail and its guardians are in question.

Certain discrepancies with the version of the *Joseph*, however, strike us; *e.g.* earlier, the vacant seat was that of Judas; it was Joseph, and not Brons, who gave Alain the charge of his brothers, and Alain was not called 'le Gros.' It is possible, however, that the first variant may be due to the *M.* copyist, as in *D.* the seat is that of Judas, and it is worth noting that the substitution of *Judas* for *Nostre Sire* in our text (p. 11) would give us a verse:

Senefiance de celi
U Judas sist au juesdi.

While on p. 16 the seat is said to be that of Judas.

D. is here probably correct. I suspect that the substitution of Brons, the Roi Peschiere, for Joseph, in the second case, is due to the fact that the former would give a rhyme for *frere*, while the latter was impracticable as a verse ending. So far as Alain is concerned the possibility of a confusion with an historical Alain is well recognised by scholars,[1] and the name in the two poems may well have been derived from two sources. We must always bear

[1] Cf. Heinzel, *op. cit.* p. 140.

in mind the possibility that Borron, for the *Queste* section of his cycle, may have drawn upon an earlier *Perceval* poem, the 'données' of which he was not at pains completely to harmonise with his introduction.

The section treating of the death of Alain and Perceval's departure for court, again shews traces of verse forms, and here we must use both *D.* and *M.*, as the two texts supplement each other:

. . . estoit le fis
Aleins le Gros, dont vous avés
Oi parler, petit enfés, (*D*)
Et estoit només Percevaus;
Donc si pensa Aleins li Gros
Que son fils i envoieroit
Quant armes baillier poroit.

'Biaus fis, quant vous serés grant,
Je vous menrai molt ricement
Au cort Artu, le rice rois.'
Ceste parole mainte fois
Li dist . . .

Et avuec lui le vaissiaus
Joseph, que l'on apele Graaus

D. is so abridged and elliptic a text that we can hardly take it as a guide for reconstruction, save where the verse form is plain, but probably the celestial message ended somewhat thus:

. . . . . .
Rois Artus, et la aprandra
Novelles par quoi il vandra
. . . a la maison
Le Roi Pescheor, son taion.

(This latter word is always employed in *M.*, and was most probably in the original.)

Et quant Alains le Gros oit
La voiz du Saint Esperit.
. . . . . .

De cest siecle trespassa.
Quant il fu mors si se pensa
Son fils qu'il iroit a la cort
Le rice roi Artu, un jor
Prist unes armes, si s'arma
Molt ricement, et si monta,
Et si ala si coiement
Que se mere n'en sot (nient.) (p. 14, ll. 9-19.)

Is it not more than probable that we are here dealing with a *Perceval-Grail* poem?

But, and this is a point to which our attention should be specially directed, this poem omits all that is characteristic of the primitive Perceval '*Enfances*.' In the previous volume of these Studies a chapter was devoted to the examination and dissection of the folk-tale basis underlying our *Perceval* romances. We found that a certain sequence of incident approved itself as the primitive form, and we saw that of that form the English *Syr Percyvelle*, and the German *Parzival*, were the most faithful representatives. Here, all these primitive folk-tale features have been dropped; the father is living at the commencement of our story; the son, so far from hearing no word of knighthood, is carefully encouraged to look forward to it as his goal; there is no trace of the forest dweller, of the lad armed only with darts, or bow and arrows, and clad in skins, or peasant's garb; he departs fittingly armed and horsed. The sole traces left of the original story are the mother's grief at his departure (which is here secret, as in the prose *Lancelot*), and the allusion to his lack of intelligence, '*car saciés que quant il issi de ciés sa mere qu'il ne savoit riens*,'

a statement scarcely in accordance with the teaching given to him by his father. Eventually we shall find that this omission of essential traits counted for much in the evolution of the *Perceval* group of romances.

It is hardly necessary to go through every section minutely, with a view to detecting possible verse forms. It will be enough to say that they are, more or less, present everywhere. The phrase, '*et Yvains le fius au roi Urien, et uns autres Yzains as blances mains*,' is probably a prose rendering of some such lines, as:

> Yvains, le fius au roi
> Urien, et uns autres Yvains
> Que l'on apele as blances mains.

which is practically identical with lines we find elsewhere.[1]

As noted above, the details of the great feast at Pentecost are, most probably, borrowed from the chronicle source, and it would be easy to reconstruct verses, but for the most part with verb rhymes:

> . . . l'encensoit
> On part tot la u il aloit;
> Le glaiol et le menthe jetoient
> Par devant lui, et li faisoient

---

[1] Cf. MS. B. N. 12577, Ff., fo. 195 *vo.*, and 196. In the list of names of those knights who depart in quest of Perceval we find:

> . . li autres Yvains
> Que l'on sornomme as blances mains.

The mention of the Dame de Malehaut seems to indicate a knowledge of the *Lancelot* story; she is also mentioned by Manessier. *D.* is probably right in separating Dodinel from this connection; according to the *Merlin* he was son to King Belinans, and Queen Yglauce, who is sister to King Nentre de Garlot. MS. B. N. 337, Ff. fo. 39.

but the passage concerning the Round Table seems certainly to have been in verse:

> . . . li rois prist
> Ses douze pers, et si les fist
> Asseoir as douze lius
> Et le tresismes remest vius.

But all this passage is but an introduction to the adventure of the Perilous Seat, of which I will treat in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE SIEGE PERILOUS

In the preliminary adventure, the tournament, where Perceval's valour leads to the suggestion that he may be worthy to fill the Siege Perilous, the only point that seems to call for comment is the identity of the lady at whose instance the hero performs such feats of valour. Nowhere else is there any sign of Perceval's being connected with a sister, or niece, of Gawain. In the great tournament,[1] introduced into the *Carados* interpolation of the *Perceval* indeed, a niece of Gawain's plays a somewhat important rôle, but her name is Aguingenor, or Guingenor. The *Carados* story was certainly very well known, and may have suggested the introduction of the character, but I should be inclined to think the name was derived from the chronicle source, and suggested by that of Hoel's niece, the victim of the giant of Mont St. Michel. This sister of Gawain (I think *M.* and not *D.* has the correct relationship) appears nowhere else. Her association with Perceval shows distinctly that the writer, though aware of the conditions inseparable from the achievement of the Christian Grail Quest, yet knew Perceval rather as an ordinary chivalric hero, a point which, if we desire really to understand and to trace the evolution of

[1] The episode of the Tourney is omitted in Mons; Potvin prints it from the Montpellier MS., it occupies ll. 13481-14943 of his edition.

the Grail legend, it behoves us to keep in mind. Perceval is not, *ab origine*, a Grail hero, and he only became such by a drastic remodelling of his story. Nor was that remodelling achieved at one blow; though the *Enfances*, as shown in the previous chapter, were dropped, the general character of the hero and his feats remained at first the same, only by gradual degrees was Perceval assimilated to the pattern upon which Galahad was, *ab initio*, shaped.

In all that concerns the Round Table the author appears to follow the Grail, rather than the Arthurian, tradition. This Round Table is not that of Arthur's court, which would seat an indefinite number of knights, and at which there was no Siege Perilous, but Joseph's symbolic Grail Table. The point of interest for us is, who confused the two, was it Borron, or another?

For the criticism of the Grail cycle the point is of importance. The first mention of the Round Table is found in Wace, who, in a well-known passage, tells that Arthur made the table for his barons, each of whom wished to be higher than the other. At the Round Table all were equal. The number of seats is not mentioned.[1]

In Layamon's translation of the *Brut* we have a detailed and picturesque description of the great fight for precedence, which was the direct cause of its foundation; here it is a cunning workman of Cornwall, and not Merlin, who makes it. Layamon's table would seat sixteen hundred and more.[2]

[1] Por les nobles barons qu'il ot
Dont cascuns mieldre estre quidot,
Fist Artus la Roonde Table
Dont Breton dient mainte fable;
Illoc seeient li vassal
Tuit chevalment et tuit ingal.—(*Brut*, vv. 9994-99.)

[2] Layamon, ed. Madden, vol. ii., p. 532.

In neither case is there any word of a vacant seat, which can only be filled at the peril of the life of the aspirant.

The Vulgate *Merlin* follows the *Merlin* of Borron. There is a Siege Perilous, but the number of knights whom the table will seat is fifty:[1] this seems to show a confusion of sources, and a departure from the *Joseph* symbolism. The *Tristan* knows the vacant seat, but in a section drawn from the prose *Lancelot*. Later on we hear of Arthur carrying with him on his journeys a silken cloth, which replaces the original table; here, of course, there is no word of the Siege Perilous.[2] The prose *Lancelot* knows it in a form differing from our version and dependent rather on that of the *Grand Saint Graal*. Here the punishment incurred by the rash adventurer is torture by fire. Moys is carried off burning, and will burn till the quest is achieved; and the nephew of Claudas is destroyed by fire from heaven.[3]

Neither Chrétien, Wolfram, nor the *Perlesvaus* knows the Siege Perilous; it is practically confined to the cyclic forms, of which our romances offer the shorter redaction. It is worth noting that Wolfram, like the *Tristan*, knows the silken cloth, which takes the place of the table proper.[4] It seems probable, therefore, that its introduction into the story is to be ascribed to Borron; the influences determining this introduction were, I think, twofold.

It will be noted that, when Arthur seats his twelve knights

[1] Cf. *Merlin*, ed. Sommer, p. 57.

[2] Cf. Löseth, pars. 311 and 377. The use of the silken cloth is not very clear in this summary, but when I read the Prose *Tristan* (ed. 1498) at Oxford, some years ago, I made a note of this as agreeing with the *Parzival*.

[3] Cf. *Legend of Sir Lancelot* (Grimm Library, xii.), p. 243.

[4] Cf. *Parzival*, Bk. vi. ll. 881-895.

at the table, they are referred to as '*le douze pers*,'[1] a term met with elsewhere. This is, of course, distinctly reminiscent of the Charlemagne cycle. Now in the final section of our romance we shall find the war with the Emperor of Rome described in a manner differing widely from the ordinary chronicle, and showing distinct affinity with the *Chansons de Geste*. It is not a conflict between two Christian powers, but rather a war of Paynim against Christian. The Emperor is allied with the Soudan and the King of Spain, brother to the latter (clearly to be understood as a Moor), and Arthur harangues his army in terms suitable to the heroes of *Aliscans* or the *Chanson de Roland*. I think it not unlikely that the chronicle from which Borron drew much of his material was of a distinctly romantic character, and had borrowed traits from the Charlemagne cycle, that the Round Table was there confined to 'Douze Pers,' and that the original idea of moulding the Grail table on that of the Last Supper was suggested by this. It is quite certain that such a table forms no part of the genuine Grail symbolism.

The Siege Perilous came from another source. In the, unfortunately, too little known continuation of Gerbert we have another version of the story, also connected with Perceval.[2] The hero, in the course of his quest for the Grail, falls in with Arthur and his knights, near to Carlion. They are engaged in the perennial task of chasing the white stag, which is here said to belong to the Black Knight.[3] Per-

[1] In the opening passage of the *Chastel Orguellous* section certain of the MSS. (*e.g.* B.N. 12577, fo. 111) mention the 'douze pers.'

[2] Cf. B.N. 12576, ff. 157-158, vo.

[3] *i.e.* to the Knight of the Tomb, who is always 'le Noir Chevalier'; as Perceval himself has cut off the head of this stag in the previous (Wauchier) section of the poem, the fairy character of the animal is manifest.

ceval is eagerly welcomed by King and Queen, and returns with them to the court, where a feast is held. On a dais, apart, there is a very fair chair, richly adorned with gold, which remains vacant. Perceval inquires why no man occupies it? All weep, and Perceval repeats his question. Arthur tells him that a fairy, '*la fee de la roche menor*,' had sent the chair to him as a present, bidding him set it on the dais at every high feast, but warning him that only the most valiant knight, and he who shall achieve the Grail quest, can occupy it with safety. Six knights of the court have already dared the adventure, and been swallowed up by the earth. To the general dismay, Perceval announces his intention of braving the test. The Queen weeps, Gawain swears, even Kay is moved to genuine concern, but Perceval remains obdurate. He seats himself in the chair; immediately the earth gives forth a *brait*, and cleaves in all directions around the seat, which, however, remains steady. Perceval keeps his seat, and shows no sign of dismay. From the gulf at his feet the six knights who have previously disappeared rise unharmed, the earth closes behind them; '*ceste aventure est achiévée*.'

Now Gerbert's version appears to me to represent the more archaic form of the story; the whole setting is more primitive than that of the prose *Perceval*; the knights who take part in the action—Gawain, Erec, Kex, Yvain, Idier fis Nut—belong to the earlier stratum of Arthurian tradition. Lancelot is indeed mentioned as present, but he plays no part in the action. Kex appears in his familiar character; he is genuinely distressed at Perceval's peril, and rejoiced at his safety, but when Idier congratulates him on having been courteous for once in his life, he promptly retorts with a sarcastic allusion to the result of Idier's sparrow-hawk challenge recounted in *Erec*, and the mabinogi of

Geraint. The successful achievement of the adventure brings about the return to earth of those who have already essayed it. It is obvious that this is what should happen, and what apparently was in Borron's original scheme. When Moys disappears, a voice from Heaven announces that he will be found again when the test has been fulfilled, '*ne ja de lui n'iert plus parole tenue devant ce que cil qui l'amplira le truist: et la ou il le trouvera, si s'en rapantira des deliz terriens.*' The knights who return to earth in Gerbert have been in the Under-World, where they have beheld the torments endured by sinners, more especially by those addicted to unnatural sins.

Here there seem to be only two explanations possible: either Gerbert's Fairy Seat is an amplification of the story told by Borron, or the Siege Perilous of Borron's Grail romance is taken from an earlier and different source.

This latter seems the more probable; Gerbert wrote after the final development of the Grail story, he knew the *Queste*, the most definitely Christian of all the versions. I do not think it at all probable that he would have taken an incident out of its setting, deprived it of its religious character, and turned it into a mere Fairy tale. There is no example of such a method on his part. Further, the incident occurs in a section of Gerbert's work which is not referable to any known *Perceval-Grail* romance, whether Kiot, *Perlesvaus*, or *Queste*, but is among a number of episodic and unrelated adventures. But if he knew an independent story, and Gerbert had an extremely wide acquaintance with popular literature,[1] he may very well have utilised it, introducing the remark that he who achieved that adventure should also accomplish that of the Grail.

[1] Cf. Vol. i. p. 146.

Another question is whether the story were already connected with Perceval or not? The point is not, here, of primary importance, but it is quite possible that it was so, and that, Perceval having been adopted as the Grail hero, this suggested to Borron the idea of the Siege Perilous as the test of the elect knight. The Grail allusion in Gerbert I hold to be no part of the original story.[1]

As related in our romance, the incident obviously lacks point; Perceval is the predestined occupant of the *liu vuit*, and his successful achievement of the test is to be followed by a full revelation as to the fate of his unfortunate predecessor. To our surprise we find the hero mysteriously rebuked for his rashness, and informed that it is by no merit of his own that he has not shared the fate of Moys; while neither here, nor at any subsequent moment, is there any further mention of that individual! The ground for blame is, apparently, that Perceval's action is premature, he has not fulfilled the necessary conditions; but never, in any case, does the Grail winner return to court after he has achieved the quest, he remains in charge of the Grail.

[1] Dr. Brugger is rather severe upon me for what he considers my undue respect for the popular attribution of certain adventures to certain heroes (*op. cit.* pp. 145, 159). Naturally I accept the view that some adventures show a tendency to attach themselves now to one hero, now to another; even that certain adventures, which originally belonged, and by reason of their nature could only belong, to one hero, may, if for any reason there is a general displacement of the original protagonist, be told of another. But it seems to me that there must have been a period at which this process of flux showed signs of crystallation; it did not continue indefinitely. I think that, by the latter years of the twelfth century the process was very fairly complete, and that, whether or not the stories were part of the primitive tradition, by that time they had become definitely connected with the names of respective heroes, which, in such cases as the above, is practically all that concerns us.

I do not see how, under any circumstances, the Siege Perilous could be other than a preliminary test of the fitness of the hero to fulfil the subsequent necessary adventures. It is thus that the writer of the *Queste* employs the incident, and I think he is right. The view to which I have come in the gradual course of these studies is that Borron did not compose the *Queste* section of his trilogy, but took over an already existing *Perceval-Grail* poem, in which he made certain superficial alterations, intended to harmonise it with the indications of his *Joseph*, but which were insufficient for that purpose. I hold this story to have been, originally, an independent tale, and that the version given by Gerbert is closer to the primitive form. It was remodelled by Borron, and inserted in the Grail story, where its presence brought about, as we shall see, decided confusion. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that it momentarily dislocated, and confused, the tale, Borron's action was justified by results, for the story appealed, in its new form, to the imagination of the hearers, and eventually became a noteworthy feature of the later Grail tradition.

At a later point we shall have occasion to speak of the relation between the prose *Perceval* and the Galahad *Queste*; here I would only draw attention to the fact that the tests of election found in the Borron cycle have been taken over by the later writer. The *Perceval* follows so directly on the *Merlin* that, as noted above, the precise point of commencement is somewhat doubtful, but the adventures are immediately subsequent to the election and coronation of Arthur, which election is determined by the test of the sword in the perron; the test of the Grail winner is his ability to fill the Siege Perilous without thereby incurring fatal consequences. Both these tests are, in the *Queste*, transferred to Galahad, he fills the

vacant seat, and withdraws the sword from the block; the influence of the Borron cycle seems to me to be clear.

In this section there are the following traces of verse forms.—

Percevaus li rois demanda
Que cil lius vius senefia

En fu molt liés, avant passa
Del Saint Esperit se segna,
Et benei, et enz s'asist (*D*)
Tantost la piere fendist

Or

Desous lui fendi la piere
Et si jeta .j. brait la terre

Quant s'asist faussement el liu
Que Joseph l'avoit desfendu (p. 21, ll. 5-12)

Quant si esauciez sera (*D*)
Lors Nostre Sire l'asenera
A la maison et a la cort[1]
Le rice Roi Pescheor

Sera garis li Rois Peschiere,
Sera rasoldee la piere,
Et li encantement charront
Qui en la terre de Bretagne sont.

Disent jamais n'aresteront
Desci adont qu'il aront
Trové le maison et le cort
Au rice Roi Pescheor.

Autretel dist mesire Gavains
Saigremors, Bedvers, et Hurgains
(*D*) (p. 22, ll. 2-15.)

[1] The rhymes could, of course, be written *cour*, Pesche*our*, as pronounced, when they would look more correct.

(I suspect that this obscure knight, Hurgains, was added for the sake of the rhyme.)

> Atant cascuns se departist,
> Ala la voie que miels le sist,
> En la queste del Graal entrerent;
> Des aventures qu'il troverent
> Ne vous puis je pas faire conte
> Fors tant quant qu'au livre en monte.
>
> (p. 23, ll. 10-15.)

There can, I think, be little doubt as to this last passage.

CHAPTER IV

THE CASTLE OF THE CHESSBOARD

BEFORE entering upon a discussion of this important section of our romance a few words as to the opening adventure, that with the lady and the slain knight, are necessary. Hoffmann[1] has discussed this incident at considerable length and comes to the conclusion that it is a combination of similar adventures found in Chrétien's *Perceval*, Wauchier's continuation, *Erec*, and the *Bel Inconnu*; a conclusion which seems very far-fetched. Nowhere does Borron shew signs of such elaborate combination of sources; the suggested analogies with *Erec* are weak in the extreme, similar parallels could be drawn from any fairly long romance; maidens carried off by a giant; maidens whose mirth changes to grief when the hero infringes their lord's command, and thereby incurs the danger of death; ill-tempered dwarfs, and boastful knights who are overthrown after having their will of many adversaries, are among the stock-in-trade of the romance writer. The fact that the slayer of the knight is l'Orgillos des Landes certainly recalls Chrétien and Wolfram, but those poets make the lady whose lover has been slain the same as the maiden who reproaches the hero for his failure at the Grail castle; here the incidents are far apart

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 23-28

The description of the knight's wounds recalls that of a dead knight in Wauchier, but there is not much choice in the description of mortal wounds (they must either be through the head or the body!) and the setting of the stories is quite different. Here the lady is watching by her dead lover, in Wauchier she awaits his coming at a distance, and we are not told who killed him. In the succeeding adventure Perceval kills a giant who holds a maiden captive, and gives her the castle of the slain monster, but there is no connecting link between the two adventures. I think we may consider this as a mere piece of 'padding,' and of no importance for the critical investigation of the text.

It is quite otherwise with the succeeding incidents; the castle of the Chessboard; Perceval's visit to his mother's house; and the meeting with the Loathly Lady; these stories, told with considerable detail, have each and all of them their counterpart in Wauchier, and the relation between the texts is of capital importance for determining the place in the evolution of the Grail cycle which should be assigned to our romance.

In a long and detailed criticism of vol. I.,[1] Dr. Brugger has devoted particular attention to this group of adventures, and I welcome the opportunity here afforded me of retracing ground already once traversed, and of examining the evidence afresh in the light of a searching criticism.

Dr. Brugger's opinion on the general position is that all this section was derived from Wauchier, and that it was he who first connected the incidents with Perceval. At the same time we must bear in mind that Dr. Brugger is the advocate of a genuine 'Borron' *Perceval*, and attaches

[1] *Zeitschrift für Franzosische Sprache*, Band xxx., Heft 6-8, pp. 122-162. For this adventure, cf. pp 127-131.

great importance to the trilogy, *Joseph*, *Merlin*, *Perceval*, which he holds to have been the first Arthurian prose romances.[1]

The question before us is threefold: *a.* What was the respective date of the two writers? *b.* Were these adventures in the original draft of the romance, or were they added by the prose redactor? *c.* Did Borron and Wauchier draw from a common source? If we can prove: *a.* That Wauchier must have written after Borron; *b.* That these sections were originally in verse, then we must, I think, decide in favour of *c.*, and hold that the versions are independent, but derive from a common original.

But before entering upon this investigation it may be well, in view of Dr. Brugger's criticism, to make my own position clear. I hold still as I held when I wrote vol. I.,[2] that the story of the lady of the Chessboard, who dispatched her suitor in quest of the head of the white stag, formed a part of the adventures of the hero we know as Perceval, when those adventures existed merely in the form of short, and independent, *Lais*. I say advisedly 'the hero we know as Perceval,' for I do not hold, and never have held, that Perceval was the original name. He was probably known as 'le fis de la veuve dame,' and whether Perceval, Peredur, or Tyolet has the prior claim to be connected with him is, in the absence of textual evidence, impossible to determine. I can see no trace of the story being associated with any other than with Perceval, to whom, as being brought up in the forest, and closely connected with the chase, it would naturally seem to belong.[3]

[1] Cf. *Enserrement Merlin*, No. I. pp. 68, *et seq.*

[2] Cf. vol. i. chap. iv.

[3] I nowhere, as Dr. Brugger imagines, treated the tale as an '*integral*' part of the *Lancelot* tradition; in '*The Three Days' Tour-*

Nowhere, and I say this emphatically, do I identify, or attempt to identify, the lady of the Chessboard with Blancheflor. How Dr. Brugger can have fallen into such an error I cannot conceive! From beginning to end of the chapter devoted to the study of this incident I never draw a single parallel between the tales. I said, certainly, that when Perceval, from a folk-tale, became a chivalric hero, his love also became a mortal maiden, but I was there stating the position in general terms; the idea of confounding the two stories was so foreign to my mind that I could never have conceived the possibility of such a confusion as that into which Dr. Brugger, alone among my critics, has fallen. Had I done so, I should doubtless have written, was *replaced by*, instead of *became* (as I did on p. 130), but a careful reading of the chapter should have sufficed to exonerate me from the suspicion of entertaining so truly absurd an idea! The lady of the Chessboard could have become a mortal without any such fundamental change in her story; the writer had only to introduce her by means of the door, instead of the window, and suppress the history of the Chessboard (or post-date her possession of that treasure), in fact he had only to do what has here been done, and she was quite sufficiently humanised. Of course her sister here remains a fairy, but that is a mere trifle. The Blancheflor story I hold to correspond to the Lufamour episodes in *Syr Percyvelle.*

But, why, in the name of common sense, should Wauchier, if the story were not already connected with Perceval, have dragged it into his continuation of Chrétien's poem, where,

nament' I connect that hero with an entirely different group of folk-tale themes. But if I had done so, inasmuch as Dr. Brugger himself has, in '*Alain de Gomeret*,' identified Lancelot with Perceval, he should not cite that as an argument against the *Perceval* connection.

as I have already demonstrated,[1] it upsets everything? Connected with Perceval, apart from the Blancheflor-Grail development, it is a sane and coherent tale; combined with this development it is neither. As lover of Blancheflor, and destined Grail winner, Perceval must conform to a certain standard of morality, the very fact that he makes ardent advances to the lady (never in any version ignored), is awkward, but the winding-up of the adventure in a manner that shall be perfectly consistent and harmonious, is impossible; either the hero must claim his reward (as in the majority of the MSS. he does),[2] in which case he transgresses the conditions of the quest, and should surely have been rebuked; or else the episode ends in a *reductio ad absurdum*, he has changed his mind — *voilà tout!* Wauchier, in spite of the contradictions involved, seems to have adopted the first solution; Borron, as we shall see, is more adroit; Perceval's vow only to sleep one night under any roof, enables him to extricate himself without undue loss of dignity, or *vraisemblance*, from a very awkward situation.[3]

One remark I would now modify. I[4] said I did not think

[1] Cf. vol. i. pp. 103, *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.* p. 109.

[3] Dr. Brugger's criticism of Prof. Singer's suggestion that the white stag was in reality a transformed maiden and identical with the fairest lady, from whom the slayer of the stag might claim a kiss, is scarcely to the point. Tellers of Folk-tales are not given to a pedantic accuracy of detail. In the tale of '*Macphie's Black Dog*,' the deer which becomes a woman is not merely a stag, but a *royal* stag, *i.e.* with its full complement of antlers. If the lai of *Tyolet* is the genuine work of Marie de France, it must have been composed about the time our *Perceval* romances were taking shape; Marie wrote during the reign of Henry II., 1154-89. Note also the use made by Tyolet of the fairy gift to attract the stag; it connects the two parts.

[4] Cf. vol. i. p. 118.

this episode had formed part of a *Perceval* poem, but had been preserved in a separate form. I was then under the impression that the Blancheflor connection had belonged to the earliest *Perceval-Grail* romance, but I now see reason to doubt this. Later on this question will be fully discussed.

To return to the immediate subject of our enquiry; the first point to be ascertained is, if possible, the exact dates of the literary activity of Robert de Borron and Wauchier de Denain. Unfortunately, as is so often the case in questions of literary research, we can only arrive at an approximate conclusion. Borron states in the poem of *Joseph*, that he composed his romance for Gautier de Monbéliard. This noble took the cross in 1199, became subsequently Constable of Jerusalem, and Regent of Cyprus, and died in 1212, without returning to France. Consequently if Borron composed his poems at his direction he must have done so before the beginning of the thirteenth century.[1]

Wauchier, whose name is given in the *Perceval* MSS. in varying forms,[2] has been identified by M. Paul Meyer with Wauchier, or Gauchier, de Denain, a writer who has left a very considerable number of translations from Latin *Lives of the Saints*, the prose text of which is interspersed with moral reflections in octosyllabic verse.[3]

[1] Cf. Hucher '*Le Saint Graal*,' vol. i. p. 128.

[2] Cf. vol. i. p. 270, for detailed references; we have Gautier, or Gaucher de Denet, Donaing, Dünsin, Doulenz, Dordain, Doudain, and Dons.

[3] Cf. *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, vol. xxxiii., pp. 258-292. The majority of Wauchier's translations are found in a thirteenth-century MS. in the Library of Carpentras. The verse reflections exhibit much the same character as certain passages in the *Perceval* continuation. Wauchier spells his name both with a W, and

The date at which Wauchier wrote cannot be fixed within exact limits; the prologue to his *Lives* runs thus: '*Mais a cels qui l'entendent volentiers vodrai je conter, por ce qu'il i praignent bones esamples et retiegnent, les Vies des sainz Peres, que li bons cuens Philippes, marchis de Naimur, qui fu fil Baudoin, le bon conte de Flandres et de Haino, et la bonne contesse Margarite, qui les a faites translater de Latin en roumanz.*'[1] Philip was Count and Marquis of Namur from 1196 to 1212, when he was succeeded by his sister Yolande.[2]

But Wauchier also apparently enjoyed the patronage of Jeanne, the ward of Philip, who succeeded her father Baldwin, as Countess of Flanders in 1206. In the prologue to a '*Vie de Sainte Marthe*,' which M. Meyer considers to be also Wauchier's work, we read:

Ensi le commande ma dame
Cui Diex garisse cors et ame,
Et ait merchi de son bon pere
Ki fu et quens et Emperere
De Constantinople le grant
Et de sa mere le vaillant
Ki fu tiés gentils dame et sainte.[3]

M. Meyer considers that this was written after Jeanne's marriage in 1211, and it seems a very natural hypothesis that, after the death of his first patron, Marquis Philip, in 1212, Wauchier should have passed to the service of that

G; as M Paul Meyer has adopted the former as the more correct in his article in *Hist. Litt.*, it seems best to consider it as the official form, and adhere to it throughout.

[1] *Ibid.* p. 261.

[2] For details of Philip's life, cf. *L'Art de vérifier les Dates.* Vol. iii. p. 116.

[3] *Loc. cit.* p. 289.

[4] Cf.

patron's ward, who would, in all probability, be familiar with his work.

Now it was for this very Countess Jeanne that Manessier wrote his continuation of the *Perceval*, and it seems most probable that Wauchier, also, composed his version at her command. Of his two patrons she is the one who we know took an interest in romance literature; we cannot say that Philip did not, but what we know of the general tenor of his life would lead to the conclusion that his tastes inclined rather to Ecclesiastical than to Romantic legend.[1] In this connection the latter part of M. Meyer's study is interesting. After remarking that he has not recognised Wauchier's style in other collections of *Lives of the Saints*, he continues: '*Il ne serait pas impossible, toutefois, qu'il fût l'auteur d'une vaste compilation d'histoire ancienne, s'étendant de la Création du monde jusqu'au temps de César, qui fut composée entre* 1223 *et* 1230, *pour un châtelain de Lille, appelé Roger. L'auteur anonyme de cette composition aime, comme Wauchier, à joindre, à certains de ses récits des réflexions morales, rédigées en vers octosyllabiques.*[2] Later on M. Meyer[3] explains that the author in his prologue states his intention of treating of the early history of France and of Flanders. M. Meyer suggests that Wauchier may have carried on his continuation of the *Perceval* simultaneously with his other work, but does it not rather look as if, towards the end of his career, Wauchier had fallen from court favour, that his *Perceval*, unfinished at the moment,

[1] Cf. the story of his extremely edifying end related in *L'Art de vérifier les Dates*, v. *supra*.

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 289. In a note M. Meyer draws attention to an analysis of the work in *Romania*, vol. xiv. p. 37, and to additions made to that study in *Bulletin de la Société des anciens textes français*, 1895, pp. 83-91.

[3] *Op. cit.* p. 292.

was continued by his successor, Manessier, and that Wauchier, under other patronage, undertook a work more consonant with his special tastes? It has generally been supposed that Manessier wrote his continuation between 1214-1227,[1] a date that fits in well with that of the history composed for the châtelain Roger. With the scanty information at our command we can do no more than conjecture the reason for the unfinished state of the *Perceval*; but, if the history be also Wauchier's, it is strange that two works by the same hand should have had the same fate, and the solution proposed above would seem to offer a rational explanation of so curious a fact.

In any case, if Borron composed his Grail romance, as he says he did, for Gautier de Monbéliard, he must have done so before that noble left France, *i.e.* in the closing years of the twelfth century. Wauchier's literary career, if it extended over the first quarter of the thirteenth, can then hardly have begun, and moreover, as we must remember, he does not seem to have written in France, his patrons were all Flemish. There are, therefore, very strong *a priori* grounds for believing that Borron wrote independently of Wauchier.[2]

[1] Cf Birch-Hirschfeld, *Sage vom Gral*, pp. 110 and 118.

[2] The above dates have an important bearing upon that section of the *Perceval* which follows immediately upon Chrétien's uncompleted work. In vol. i. p. 215, I said that I thought it possible that the section between ll. 10601 (the end of Chrétien's poem), and 11596 (the commencement of the *Brun de Branlant* episode), might be the work of copyists, who had before them the source of Chrétien's *Gawain* adventures, which I hold to have been a poem of considerable length and importance, *i.e.* the *Chastel Merveilleus* poem. I did not say, as M. Jeanroy, (*Revue des Langues Romanes*, vol. 50, p. 542) states, that this might be the work of copyists : '*Complétant de leur mieux l'œuvre inachevée*'; the work, *i.e.* Chrétien's source, was a finished work, and the copyists gave the completion in whole, or in part, as time or pre-

Most undoubtedly there is a close connection between the versions, but if we can show that, while there are distinct traces of verse forms, the reconstructed lines rarely,

ference determined. For this is what I now think really happened. I deferred my decision on the point until the appearance of M. Meyer's study on Wauchier; now, with the dates at our disposal, I do not think it probable that Chrétien's poem remained for so long in a fragmentary condition, when the material for concluding the *Gawain* portion, at least, was available. The variants of this section are peculiar in character, so much so that they led the late M. Gaston Paris to the conclusion that the copyists were here working upon notes left by Chrétien; I went very fully into the subject in chap. vii. of the first volume. If the copyists in general had before them a somewhat lengthy conclusion to the adventures of Gawain related by Chrétien, it would fully explain the particular character of this section, as each copyist would dwell upon the incidents which most appealed to his individual taste; *e.g.* the scribes of B.N. 12576, and B.M. Add. 36614, on the stately and picturesque arrival of Guiromelans; the scribe of B N. 1450 on the characteristic confession of Gawain, and the grief of Clarissanz

Both Dr. Brugger and M. Jeanroy think the passages quoted by me in vol. 1. chap. vii. are the work of the copyist of B.N. 1450 (on the passage referred to above found in B N. 12576, and B.M. Add. 36614 they express no opinion); they must, I think, have overlooked the footnote, p. 198, in which I pointed out that the copyist of 1450 was following a copy he did not understand, and only reproduced very imperfectly. I went over the passages in question several times before submitting my copy to M. Meyer, who himself compared it with the original, and fully confirmed alike the correctness of my transcription, and of my view that the scribe had not understood his text. It is therefore perfectly certain that the copyist in question did not invent these passages. We must remember that for many years B.N. 12576 was in this respect precisely in the same position as B.N 1450, *i.e* it was the unique example of a certain lengthy and detailed passage; the B.M. text is a comparatively recent acquisition, and if any critic had carefully examined 12576, and printed from it the passage relating the coming of Guiromelans, that too, might very well have been assigned to the imagination of the individual scribe. After reading the criticisms of these scholars, I asked M. Paul Meyer to give me his opinion as to

if ever, agree with the parallel passage in Wauchier, our view of the mutual independence of the texts will be strengthened.

the probable date of the three Paris MSS. B.N. 794, 1450, and 12576. M. Meyer informs me that while all three belong to the first half of the thirteenth century, 794 and 1450 are probably older than 12576, and date from the first quarter. Thus the MS. in question, B.N. 1450, may quite well, with the exception of Riccardiana, be our oldest *Perceval* text.

It is only to be expected that an investigation based for the first time upon an examination of *all* the texts will yield results differing widely from that based on a partial knowledge, more especially when that knowledge was derived from so defective, and *remanié*, a text as Mons; but critics should really not be so startled at apparently unorthodox theories that they neglect to examine carefully the evidence on which those theories are founded. Is it quite fair to say, as M. Jeanroy does (*Op. Cit.* p. 541), that I say nothing as to authors, where the part of each commences, etc.? I have noted carefully where each section, *Chastel Merveilleus*, *Chastel Orguellous*, and the interpolations, *Brun de Branlant* and *Carados*, begin and end; each part is the subject of separate study. As to the authors, what was there to say? We have no fresh evidence relating to Chrétien; M. Paul Meyer was then writing of Wauchier, his discovery; and unfortunately, I could find little or nothing authentic to say of Bleheris! As to pseudo-Wauchier, whom M. Jeanroy thinks me irreverent in rejecting, I never have been able to understand why we talked about him at all! The term means that the supposed authority of Wauchier has been claimed, either by a writer who was not he, or by others on behalf of that writer, as in the case of the connection of Borron and Map with the latest developments of the Arthurian cycle. But the name is never mentioned save in the well-known passage:—

> Gauciers de Donaing qui l'estoire
> Nos a mise avant en memoire
> B M. Add. 26614 fo. 25 8vo

Consequently to use the term *pseudo-Wauchier* to express the very possible fact that the work of Wauchier did not begin immediately after the conclusion of Chrétien's share of the poem is manifestly incorrect, and should, in any case, be dropped.

From the prose text we can restore the following lines :—

Et vit le pont abaissié
Et le porte desfermée
Tot a ceval si s'en entra
La porte tantost se ferma. (*D*) (p. 31, ll. 9, 10.)

Vit une cambre, et l'ouvri,
Mais dedens ne trova nulli. (*D*) (*Ib.*, l. 24.)

Et dist, 'Par la foi que je doi
Nostre Segnor mervelle voi.

Je ai dehait quant jamais moi
Ne autre cevalier matera
Ne honte (de ce giu) fera.

. . . par Saint Nicholai
. . . je les i jeterai. (p. 32, ll. 15-32.)

I think the presence in the text of so otherwise unmeaning, and rather unusual, an invocation, testifies to an original rhyme :—

Com il l'ot pensé si le fist
Molt durement si l'en requist (p. 33, ll. 20, 21.)

Tant que li demisele dist
Sire, sacés se Dex m'aist (*Ib.*, l. 22.)

Sacés que je vous ameroie
Segnor de cest castel feroie (*Ib.*, ll. 27, 28.)

Sacés vostre amie serai
. I . tel braket vous baillerai

Grant alëure alés aprés
Colpes le cief, le m'aportés (p. 34, ll. 2-6.)

Biaus Sire force n'est mie drois
Force me poés vous bien faire (p. 35, ll. 17, 18.)

Et Percevaus l'a respondi
'Por çou ne le perdrai je mie' (*Ib.*, ll. 25, 26.)

It would be possible to reconstruct a considerable number of other verses, but, as a rule, with verb rhymes, and the above are sufficient to demonstrate the character of the source.

Turning to Wauchier's text we find certain parallel verses :—[1]

Et vit si beles les entrées
Et les grans portes desfremées. 22397-98.

Et dist 'Jamais ne materoiz
Nul chevalier, n'est mie droiz. 22483-84.

Se la tieste m'en aportés. 22560.

Force a faire n'est mie drois
Et force me poés vous faire

(Here B.N. 794 agrees exactly with the prose :—

Force a faire n'est mie drois
Force me poez vous bien faire)

Et Perceval moult tost li dit
Nel perdrai ja por si petit. 22651-52.

At the same time there are divergencies in the texts which are important for critical purposes. In the first four verses I propose there are two details foreign to Wauchier ; *a.* the drawbridge is lowered, which is of course implied in *W.* but not stated ; *b.* the door shuts of itself after Perceval, of which there is no trace in *W.* In *W.* Perceval enters a hall, well furnished, and garnished with arms ; there is no trace of this in *p. P.* In *W.* he finds a chamber :—

Plaine de si trés grant odor
C'ains à roi n'à empéreor
Ne peut on trover ausi beles
Si érent freskes et noveles. 22437-40.

[1] I have also compared the prose with MSS. 12576, and 794, B.N. Fonds Franç.

In the prose we read: '*et Percevaus revint arrière ens el palais, si s'en mervella molt, et dist, "Par Diu mervelles puis veoir, car ceste sale est si joncié et si sai bien qu'il n'a mie lonc tans qu'il i ot gent, et or n'i voi nului.*"'[1] I think it is clear that these two passages supplement each other, and that the context has been omitted alike in *W.* and in the prose. Perceval's remark is not in any of the *W.* texts I have consulted, which, indeed, though they differ slightly in the wording, all agree in the details; the characteristic of the prose text is conciseness, unnecessary details are as a rule omitted. The evidence of this passage for a common original seems certain. Other points of difference are: the chessmen, which in *W.* are always of gold and precious stones, here, of black and white ivory; Perceval's remark that he prided himself on his knowledge of the game in the prose precedes his attempt to throw the chessmen out of the window, and explains his ill-temper. In *W.* this is dropped out, and the latter half of his speech, that they shall never again shame him, or any other knight, is placed when he is about to throw them out.

The cardinal difference, that the lady here speaks to him from an upper story, and enters through the door, whereas in *W.* she rises from the water, and is lifted in at the window, is of course an alteration in keeping with the general character of our version. Whether it be due to Borron, or was already in his immediate source, can hardly now be determined; there is no doubt, in any case, that *W.* is here nearer the primitive form.

All the part relating to Perceval's sudden passion for the lady is much compressed in our text, as is natural from the character of the story; it would follow inevitably on the connection of such a tale with Perceval as Grail

[1] p. 32.

hero. The same remarks apply here as above. Another distinction between the two versions is that here Perceval remains the night, and the chase of the white stag takes place on the ensuing day; in *W.* he starts off at once. Here, the prose seems the more probable; as I have remarked above, good use is made of this feature, and its introduction may be due to Borron, but, on the other hand, the tendency of our text is to shorten the adventures, and the writer is not, as a rule, remarkable for constructive ability, so it may well have been in the original tale.[1]

In *W.* the white stag is said to be in the park belonging to the castle, in our text in the forest, which, taking into consideration all the circumstances and the fact, noted above,[2] that the stag is spoken of as belonging to the knight of the tomb, seems the more likely.

In the latter section of the adventure the prose text gives distinctly the better version, the lady who steals the brachet is here *une vieille*, in *W. une pucele de malaire*; later we learn that this is the fairy mistress of the knight of the tomb, who could at will assume the form of an old woman, or of a lovely maiden. *Vieille* seems here more in conformity with the story. The challenge to the knight in our text runs: 'Faus fu qu'illuec vous painst' (in allusion to the figure of a knight painted outside the

[1] There are two possibilities; (*a*) Borron may have known the story in an independent form; or (*b*) as having already been worked into a *Perceval-Grail* poem. At the conclusion of our study of the *Queste* section I shall discuss the whole intricate question of the evolution of the Grail tradition; here it is only necessary to say that in the case of (*a*) our text would derive directly from the same source as *W.*, in the case of (*b*), indirectly.

[2] Cf. *supra*, p. 140.

tomb), or, in *D.* 'qu'illuec vous mist,' which is the better form.

In *W.*

> Vassal, ke faites vous ichi?

later on—

> De nient faire s'entremist
> Qui ci en cel tombel vous mist
> Levés sus, trop aves geu. 22661-63.

Taking the circumstances of the case into consideration, the knight having been brought there by his mistress, the first, besides being the more direct and simpler form, involves an insult to the lady, and is therefore, in effect, a challenge to her knight. There can be little doubt that here the prose has preserved the older form, indeed, this is practically proved by the fact that in the scene of the regaining of the stag's head, where the history of the knight is related by his brother, the challenge is always given as in our text.[1]

It will be well now to turn to this conclusion, as *W.* also gives it, and there are obvious advantages in treating the story as a whole, rather than in two widely separated sections.[2]

This latter part is told by *W.* at great length, and in two distinct portions, separated by a number of adventures more or less closely connected with the Grail. In each instance Perceval comes upon a tent, and a maiden seated beneath a spreading tree, from a branch of which hangs a stag's head which he at once recognises as that stolen

[1] I especially noted this in my study of the *Perceval* MSS. The texts are all in agreement here.

[2] Cf. p. 62.

from him. Perceval seizes it, despite the remonstrances of the maiden, who assures him he will pay dearly for his audacity. The sound of a horn is heard, and a deer, pursued by the lost brachet, comes up, followed by a knight on horseback. The maiden complains that Perceval has taken the stag's head; he maintains it is, in fact, his; Perceval and the knight fight, and the latter, vanquished, is sent with his lady a prisoner to Arthur's court. But before they part Perceval asks if he knows anything of the lady of the Chessboard, or of the knight of the tomb. Here the two versions, in a measure, part company; in *W.* the knight protests he knows nothing whatever of the castle and its mistress:

> 'Sire, fait il, n'en parles ja
> Que n'en sai rien, foi que dois vous.' 27432-43.

and later on even more explicitly:

> Cil dist et Dameledieu jura
> Qu'il ne set voie ne sentier
> Par u le pëust adrecier. 27604-6.

In our text, on the contrary, the two parts are closely connected: the lady of the Chessboard is sister to the fairy mistress of the knight of the tomb (whose story, though told at less length, agrees with *W.*); she is jealous of her sister, whose lover has overthrown and shamed many knights, and knowing that one would come who should eventually avenge the others, has instigated Perceval to the chase of the stag, apparently knowing that her sister, who can at will assume the form of an old woman, would seize the opportunity to bring about an encounter with her lover. He knows the way to her castle well, and directs

Perceval aright; on the other hand he does not know the way to the castle of the Roi Pescheor, nor has he ever heard of any knight who found it, though many have sought.

There can be little doubt that here the prose text has the preferable version; the two parts of the story hang well together, and the one explains the other. Nevertheless, as they now stand, neither the prose *Perceval* nor Wauchier exactly represents the original form; for the prose text has done away with all the fairy attributes of the lady of the castle; if she be, as our text says, sister to a fairy, she must surely be a fairy herself, even as *W.* makes her. *W.*, on the other hand, has dropped the relationship, influenced, I suspect, by the desire to prolong his story; a number of adventures intervene before Perceval reaches the castle again.[1] Of course the knight could not state that the lady of the Chessboard was sister to his brother's mistress without betraying that he knew all about her, which was not wanted here; hence *W.*, or perhaps his immediate source, dropped the connection, and acting on the hint provided by Perceval's question as to the Grail castle, transferred the knight's ignorance of this latter to the castle of the Chessboard.

Perceval's conduct when he at last reaches the castle is also significant, as I have pointed out (vol I. chap iv.).[2] Wauchier's evidence on this point is most conflicting, sometimes the lady acquits herself of her obligations in the conventional manner, sometimes the point is evaded;

[1] The manner in which he finally arrives there is very awkwardly motived in *W.* A mysterious voice, which Berne 113 states to be that of '*. I. haut arcangle grant*' bids him put down the brachet and follow it, the dog leads him directly to the castle.

[2] Cf. *supra*, p. 66.

the prose text is quite clear; Perceval, who has already spent one night at the castle (which he has not done in *W.*), cites his vow never to remain more than one night under the same roof as excuse for a speedy departure, an excuse which the lady accepts in good faith: '*Sire, qui de vostre veu vous feroit partir saciés qu'il ne vous ameroit gaires, ne sor çou que vous m'avés dit ne vous oseroie jou esforcier ne proiére faire.*'[1]

I do not think it possible to examine closely the prose version of the stag hunt without coming to the conclusion that it is one of the most coherent, and best motived, sections of the romance. After very careful study I am now of opinion that it was in Borron's source, and that, originally an independent *Lai*, it had already been worked into a *Perceval-Grail* poem, which did not contain the Blancheflor connection.

There are again indications of rhyme, but not corresponding with *W.*

> Ensi cevauça molt pensis
> Et ala . ij . jors et . ij . nuis
> Qu'onques ne but ne ne manga
> Que pummes et fruits qu'il trova. (p. 62, ll. 17-19.)

In *W.* he finds the stag's head the day after his adventure at the Castle of Maidens, where he has been well fed, and lodged.

> . j . palefrois
> Dejoste li ataciés
> Estoit moult bien enselés (*D*)
> D'une moult riche sambue (*D*)
> Par desor li il vit pendue

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 67.

Le teste de cerf quil avoit
Tranchiée, lonc tans avoit. (*D*) (p. 62, ll. 23-25.)

Et le tenoit parmi la cuisse
Et tel paor avoit le bisse. (p. 63, l 8.)

In *W.* it is a *cerf*, I suspect the influence of rhyme here.

—Que si il l'en donoit
. j . autre colp qu'il l'ociroit,
En arriére se traist
Li cria qu'il ne l'ocesist.[1] (p. 64, ll. 2-4.)

Li dist qu'ele le menroit
En (. j .) tel liu u il poroit
Tant faire d'armes que nus plus,
Car li (maisnie le roi) Artus.[2]— (*Ib.*, ll. 20, 21.)

Que teus chevaliers i venroit
Que tous les autres vengeroit. (p. 65, l. 22)

To sum up the position; the theory that Wauchier's continuation was the source of our romance must be dismissed on the following grounds:—

(*a*) On that of date; *W.* may have been anterior to the prose redaction of the Perceval, he was certainly posterior to the original verse form. But there is strong reason to

[1] The value of reconstructed verses in the case of combats is, I think, doubtful. There are always a number of verb rhymes, but not much besides; the encounters between knights are always cast more or less in the same mould. I have, therefore, offered very few examples, as their evidence appears to be indecisive.

[2] Cf. *W.*

Ci passent li bon chevalier,
Li corageus el li plus fier
De la court le bon roi Artus.

believe not only that Borron wrote the original *Quest* section in verse, but that he utilised for it an already existing poem, of which this adventure formed a part.

(*b*) On the ground of internal evidence: the variants between *W.* and the prose text are not contradictory but complementary, *i.e.* they are precisely such variants as may be found in two writers drawing from a common source, of which one incorporates this detail, and omits that, and the other does *vice-versâ*.

(*c*) On the ground of the superior structure of the story in the prose version: here the three parts, the Chessboard adventure, the Knight of the Tomb, and the finding of the stag's head, are all closely connected one with the other; in *W.* they are separate, unrelated, and incapable of being harmonised with the version he is ostensibly completing, *i.e.* Chrétien's poem. Now neither Borron nor Wauchier shows much regard for construction, as we shall eventually realise. Borron did not hesitate to throw his whole scheme out of gear by the adoption of a section based upon a different rendering of the Grail tradition, consequently he is hardly likely to have gone to the pains of combining previously independent tales into one harmonious whole. On the other hand *W.*, who has simply thrown together a mass of stories, drawn from widely differing sources, might very well have dislocated a coherent tale by the introduction, between its component parts, of independent adventures. The very character of the tale, as I pointed out in vol. i.,[1] invited such treatment.

Here, then, the verdict must be given against *W.*; we

[1] Cf. vol. i. pp. 116, 117.

shall see whether an examination of the other parallel adventures yields the same result, or not.[1]

[1] Mr. Alfred Nutt, in his *Studies in the Legend of the Holy Grail*, arrived at the same conclusion as that here drawn, viz. that the two versions are not dependent one on the other, but derive from a common source. Mr. Nutt was, however, rather led astray by the interpolated adventure of Perceval with the brother of the Red Knight, found in certain texts (Mons B. N. 1453, Edinburgh, and the printed edition), which identifies the lady who carried off the brachet with the Fisher King's daughter. Now neither the lady nor her knight ever knows anything about the Grail, and, as I have pointed out in vol. i. (pp. 256, 257), this particular group of adventures bears every sign of being an interpolation of the most *banal* character; the attribution of a daughter to the Fisher King is also a most unprimitive feature. There is, therefore, no ground for assuming, as Mr. Nutt does, that *W.* knew *two* versions of the story; I think he knew but one, and that derives ultimately from the same source as the prose text.

CHAPTER V

PERCEVAL AND HIS SISTER

WITH this chapter we enter on another phase of our investigation, and on one which for the elucidation of the Grail development is of capital importance. In the previous volume[1] I have drawn attention to the curious fact that, whereas the primitive form of the story undoubtedly represents the hero as an only child, the majority of the *Perceval-Grail* texts give him a sister, a maiden of devout and exalted character, who eventually becomes, in the *Queste*, one of the leading *dramatis personæ* of the story. Long ago, in a notice of Wechssler's Grail Study,[2] I had laid emphasis on this point, maintaining that the introduction of this character into the legend, and its subsequent development, was one of the problems of the Grail literature most urgently requiring elucidation; the point, however, was not taken up, and it has not even yet received the attention it merits. Hitherto I have abstained from making any suggestion, I did not see my way clearly; now, as the result of certain remarkable developments of my most recently published work, I think it will be

[1] Cf. vol. I. chap. II. pp. 67, 68. Dr. Brugger in a note to his review (*op. cit.* p. 125) asks, 'Kommt es auf '*the majority*' an? Certainly, in a case like this, where a departure from the primitive form has been so widely adopted.

[2] Cf. *Folk-Lore*, vol. ix. pp. 346 *et seq.*

possible to reach a definite conclusion, and to frame a theory which shall satisfy the conditions of the problem.

It is, of course, obvious that here, as in the adventure of the Chessboard, discussed in the preceding chapter, there is a striking correspondence with the Wauchier continuation of the *Perceval*, and the same questions must again be asked: Is the one text dependent on the other, or do both derive from a common source?

We will first hear what Dr. Brugger has to say on the subject.[1] According to him Perceval's sister is an invention of Wauchier, designed with the view of bringing back that hero to his mother's house. 'Eine Art poetischer Gerechtigkeit verlangte dass der Held wieder an diejenigen Orte zurückkommen sollte die fur seine Schicksal entscheidend gewesen waren.'

With this object, continues the critic, Wauchier, Manessier, Gerbert, Kiot, and Wolfram (?) bring him back to Blancheflor and Belrepaire. Was it not, therefore, suitable that he should return to the spot where the first impulse to chivalric adventure had been given to him? But he could not hold a monologue in the wilderness, so the sister was invented to give him information; the two suggestions do not seem quite to agree.

This theory is extremely ingenious, and might have been convincing, did Wauchier show the smallest sign of originality or constructive ability, but he does not. His whole continuation is a manifest piecing together of incidents drawn from diverse sources, and thrown together without the smallest attempt at harmony.[2]

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 126.

[2] It must be remembered in this connection that the greater portion of Wauchier's extant work consists of translations, and that, though he had a faculty for rhyming, we have no evidence that he possessed any power of independent invention.

Nor do the episodes cited stand on all fours, Perceval must return to Blancheflor in fulfilment of his promise of marriage; he does so in Gerbert, possibly in Kiot (who may be Gerbert's source here), but though he marries her in Wolfram it is at his first visit; he eventually rejoins her elsewhere than at Pelrapar, in fact Kondwiramur comes to Parzival, not Parzival to Kondwiramur. As to his second visit to the lady of his love in Wauchier, the less said about it the better from the point of constructive value.[1] There is no obligation, the mother being dead, for him to return to his home; in such a version as that of *Syr Percyvelle*, where she survives, he would rightly do so.

Dr. Brugger seems to have overlooked Perceval's words, which I quoted in a footnote:[2]

> . . . Je sui assenés
> Je cioi, prés del manoir ma mere
> Mais jou ni ai serour ne frere
> Mien ensiant ne autre ami. vv. 25768-71.

Or is he prepared to contend that Wauchier first invented the figure of the sister, and then prefaced her appearance with a round denial of her existence? On the other hand, such a contradiction might well be expected from a careless compiler, who knew more than one version of the story. Later on Dr. Brugger practically admits the fact that Wauchier had another *Perceval-Grail* source than Chrétien's poem; he says:[3] 'Wir konnen aber wohl mit Sicherheit behaupten dass Gauchier's Quelle nicht identisch mit derjenigen Chrétien's war, sonst hatten wir in

[1] Cf. vol. i. chap. iv. pp. 103-6.
[2] Vol. i. p. 60.
[3] *Op. cit.* p. 142.

den Perceval-abenteuern, *speziall auch in Gralabenteuern* Percevals bei Gauchier, viel mehr Aehnlichkeit mit Chrétien und Wolfram.'[1] Why should not the sister have been in this source, which was not Chrétien? The romance in which she reaches her apotheosis, the *Queste*, is one which shows no trace of influence by Chrétien or Wauchier.[2]

So far as holding a monologue in the desert is concerned, Perceval is not a hero who indulges in such diversions; taciturnity is one of his marked characteristics; he confines himself as a rule to answering questions, as here. As a fact the monologue, if it may be so called, with its allusion to the deserted home, does take place in the wilderness, before he sees his sister.

Now when we find a figure which has no part in the primitive tale assuming such an importance that it is preserved in the majority of the versions, and elaborated into a most striking and picturesque feature in the final stages of development, it is, I think, obvious that that figure was not introduced into the story by chance, or from an obscure source, but was from the first invested with a certain character of intention and authority. Perceval's sister I believe to have been the invention of the

[1] The italics are mine. Dr. Brugger shows a curious mixture of independent and genuine critical insight, and conservative adherence to the old-fashioned view that where two texts resemble each other one must of necessity be a copy. He sees clearly the failure of this method as applied to Chrétien, who was really a poet of standing in the literary world, but applies it to Wauchier, of whose name, outside his own mention of it, we have no record. The result is that Dr. Brugger's criticisms are often self-contradictory.

[2] Dr. Brugger may perhaps point to the apparition of the white stag, but as he insists that this is not a transformation story in Wauchier, the *Queste* form, which *is* a transformation tale, cannot be derived from the *Perceval*.

writer of an early *Perceval-Grail* poem,[1] the source alike of Borron's version, the *Perlesvaus*, and the *Queste*. These three romances, I believe, derive from the same source, and that a different source from the Chrétien-Wolfram group. I shall not be surprised if we eventually find that the *Perlesvaus* has retained the larger share of original features.

I agree with Dr. Brugger that Perceval's return to his mother's house is in effect closely connected with his sister, but in an inverse sense to that in which he understands it; *i.e.* I should lay the stress not on the place but on the person, the sister was not invented for the purpose of bringing Perceval back to his home, but Perceval returns thither in order that he may be brought into touch with his sister, and learn from her what it behoves him to know concerning the Grail. This, the original signification of the episode, is much better preserved in our text than in Wauchier. The introduction of the sister was probably due to the innately human and non-symbolic character of the hero; Perceval really has nothing in common with the Grail tradition, and certain at least of the writers seem to have been fully conscious of this; the invention of the maiden of devout and consecrated life, *une sainte chose*, as Gerbert calls her, both tended to the edification of the hearers, and also served to link Perceval himself more closely with the object of the quest. The writer of the *Queste* has understood this clearly.

Now let us compare the versions, and see whether they do or do not bear out this theory.

[1] I do not say *first*, as I am not quite sure whether, in the first instance, Perceval did not simply step into Gawain's shoes, and take over the adventures of a *Gawain-Grail* poem. So far our 'data' are not complete.

In Wauchier, as we have seen, Perceval recognises the surroundings of his home, but remarks that he has no relations left there. On arriving the servants meet and welcome, but do not recognise, him. They disarm him, and a fair maiden, richly dressed, comes forth from a chamber and salutes him. Perceval knows her for his sister (!), but does not reveal himself, he wishes first to learn,

> Combien a que morte est sa mere
> Et s'ele a plus serour ne frere
> Oncle, parent, ne autre ami.

(a passage which seems to testify to the influence of the later tradition, which gave Perceval six brothers).[1]

They sit and talk together, the lady weeps, and Perceval asks the reason. She tells him he reminds her of her brother, whom she has not seen for over ten years; she recounts his departure in accordance with Chrétien's poem, tells him of the death, through grief, of their mother, and her burial by their hermit uncle. Perceval reveals himself, and they embrace, to the bewilderment of the household, who do not recognise him. When their lady tells them who he is they share in her joy. After meat the two ride together to the uncle's hermitage; on the way Perceval slays a knight who would carry off his sister. They come to the hermitage, where they spend the night. The next morning the Hermit asks who his niece's companion may be, and receives from Perceval a full account of all his

[1] In B. N. 337 Fonds Franç. the unique *Merlin* text, his father has fifteen sons. 'Et Agloval i amena xiiij. freres qu'il avoit, que li rois Pellinor ses peres li avoit bailliez por faire adober de la main le roi Artus,' fo. 192 v°. Later on we find all are slain save one boy and a girl, both in early youth, thus falling into line with our text.

adventures. He, in his turn, rebukes Perceval for having slain the knight on the previous day; gives him good advice as to his future conduct, and pronounces a lengthy discourse, setting forth the scheme of salvation. Perceval and his sister return towards evening to their home, pass the night, and in the morning Perceval departs, in spite of the entreaties of his sister, who protests he will do her a wrong if he leave her thus unprotected. The episode occupies in Wauchier the better part of a thousand lines, 25760-26448, and from this moment we have, on his part, no further mention of the lady.

In our text Perceval, after wandering long,[1] 'parmi les forests et parmi les boskages,' comes by chance to the 'gaste forest,' but does not recognise it, 'car molt avoit lonc tans qu'il n'i avoit esté.' The 'manoir,' we are told, now belongs to a maiden who is his sister. There is no contradiction here, as though the sister has not been previously mentioned we have never been told that Perceval is an only child. The lady herself comes out to meet him, accompanied by one, or two, maidens, her kinswomen (*nièces* is probably to be taken in a general sense here, as Perceval and his sister constitute the entire family). There is no mention of the servants at the reception, and the general impression is that of a simpler household than that described by Wauchier. The sister's behaviour is the same in both versions. She weeps at the thought of her brother, but her account of the departure agrees with the previous statements of Borron, not, as in Wauchier, with Chrétien Here *D.* differs from *M*, in the former the lady says she had seven brothers, but as immediately afterwards she states that at her father's death, 'nos remansis-

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 37.

mes je et mon frere jeunes enfants,' and never makes any further allusion to other brothers, *M.* is certainly in the right. The introduction of .VII. is probably due to the copyist of *D.*, under the influence of the prose *Lancelot*, which, when this manuscript was written, 1301, had pretty well supplanted earlier versions of the story. We have a full account of the death of the father, and the miraculous Voice, which directed Perceval to go to Arthur's court, all agreeing with the earlier account.

Here we perceive the radical difference between Wauchier and our version: in Wauchier the sister makes no mention of the Grail, here she loses no opportunity of referring to it. She repeats the celestial message; she asks Perceval if he has yet been to the court of the Fisher King; she tells him, speaking of the Hermit uncle, of the connection of their family with the Grail, and declares the high honour to which he himself has been predestined. Now let us note that, apparently, it is only through the medium of the Siege Perilous adventure that Perceval knows himself to be the son of Alain, and grandson of Brons, and there the fact that he is destined to achieve the quest is not stated. We saw above that this episode was probably introduced by Borron, and is not a very happy invention. Save for that, Perceval, who was not at court when Merlin made his initial announcement of the presence of the Grail in Arthur's kingdom, might very well have been entirely ignorant of his connection with the Fisher King: the Voice which spoke to his father was probably a personal revelation. Were it so, then the sister's communication would be of cardinal importance. I believe that in the Grail poem Borron was utilising for his Quest section this was really the case, and that in the versions where the sister was omitted (*i.e.* the Chrétien-Wolfram

group) the rôle of informant was transferred to the Hermit uncle.[1]

In the visit to his uncle which follows the Grail again dominates the situation; instead of a long recital of adventures on the part of Perceval and an equally long moral discourse on the part of the Hermit,[2] the latter at once demands if Perceval has been to the Fisher King's castle; tells of the Celestial direction under which he and his brethren acted; and of the high honour reserved for Perceval himself. It is as one of a race beloved of the Lord, and elect to His Service, that he is, henceforth, to rule his life. The conception is throughout perfectly clear and coherent, and from every point of view superior to Wauchier's pointless recital.

The adventure with the knight takes place here on the homeward journey; Perceval is so absorbed in thought over the revelations made to him by his sister and uncle that he does not heed the knight's challenge, and is on the point of being ridden down by him when his sister's warning cry rouses him to his danger. He slays the knight, and regrets having done so, as it was against his uncle's counsel, but he had brought his fate upon himself.

With regard to this adventure there is a difference of opinion among critics; some have held it to be ill-placed in our text, following as it does on the uncle's prohibition, originally a rebuke for this very action; others have con-

[1] I did not see my way, when preparing vol. i., to constructing any theory as to the relations between the different versions (cf. Brugger, *op. cit.* p. 125), but since then fresh evidence has come into my hands, which throws a flood of light upon the subject.

[2] I suspect the Hermit's discourse to be an addition of Wauchier; it is quite in the style of the moralising interpolations in the *Lives of the Saints*.

sidered its occurrence here a note of superiority on the part of the prose text.[1] It does not seem to me that the matter is of importance either way; the adventure in itself is a very ordinary one, and might well be placed in either position. It is noteworthy that Gerbert also places a similar incident after the visit to the Hermit recounted in his continuation, but here the knight is identified with Mordred, and is not slain, only sent as a prisoner to Arthur's court. Here, too, Perceval does not leave his sister alone in the forest, but commits her to the care of St. Isabel, at the Castle of Maidens, which Gerbert describes as a nunnery.[2]

The relation between Gerbert and the other texts of the cycle is by no means clear, and the whole question of his sources remains to be investigated.

We find the following traces of verse forms in this section of our text:

Si li corut a l'estrier
Et li dist 'Sire chevalier
Descendés (jus) car vous arés
Molt buen ostel si vous volés
Hui dusqu'a demain demorer.'
'Et je en ai grant mestier (*D*)

Et avuec li une chamberere
Sa niece estoit de par sa mere (*D*)

Molt durement li regarda
Et a (larmoier) commença

Si demanda qu'ele avoit
Qu'ensi tenrement ploroit (p. 38, ll. 4-14.)

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[1] Cf. Hoffmann, *op. cit.* p. 34.
[2] B. N 12576, fos. 162 v°.-165.

Sire, jou ai un joune frere
Fusmes d'un pere et d'une mere
Si avint que nos pere morust

Et bien saciés que Jesus Christ
La vois del Saint Esperist[1]
Au trespassement envoia ;
Sire, mon frere s'en ala
Trover le cort le roi Artu ;
Sire, mes frere molt jounes fu
Et de molt povre essiant,
Me mere en fu molt dolant

Et quant li demisele l'oi
En fu molt lie, et sali
Sus en plorant, et lacola
Et plus de .c. fois le baisa (*Ib.*, ll. 16-28)

S'il avoit esté a le cort
Le rice Roi Pescheor (p. 39, ll. 1, 2.)

Et ensi com li uns parloit
A l'autre, et grant joie faisoit

Grant duel, disent que molt est fole
Lor demisele qu'ensi (acole)
Et baise estrange chevalier (*Ib.*, ll. 8-12.)

Molt volentiers demoerroie
Se (iou) l'acomplie avoie (*Ib.*, l. 26.)

[1] Cf. here the examples of Borron's use of this rhyme, *supra*, p. 126. I think it very probable that, although the line would be too long, Borron really wrote 'a son trepassement envoia,' as in the prose text. The original prose redaction probably contained some statement as to what was said by the Voice; as we know that that original was fuller than either of our extant copies, it is better not to attempt a reconstruction except where the verse form is practically certain. The fact that there is a *lacuna* does not in the circumstances argue against the existence of a verse source.

Sacés si tost com je l'arai
Acomplie à vous revenrai (p. 39, l. 27)

Et maint en ceste forest desci
A demie liue lonc de ci,
Et vous a lui confesserés
Et penitance de lui prendrés.
. . . fu li uns des freie
Alain le Gros, le vostre pere.

Et de Enygeus se mere
Suer Joseph, de Brons son pere
Qu'on apele le Roi Pescheor.

Et m'a aconté que cil Brons
Qui est li vostre taions
A (en son garde) le vaissel u
Fu recuellois le Sanc Jesu ;
Et dist (por voir) que cil vaissiaus
(Est dit) et només li Graaus ;
Et il m'a dit que Nostre Sire[1]
Dist qu'a vous doit revenir
Et tant querre le covenra
Dusqu'á de vous trové sera.

Quant Perceval ensi oi
Parler, molt si s'en esjoi. (p. 40, ll. 5-21)

'C'est Percevaus li miens frere
Li fius Alain li vostre frere ;
A le cort Artu s'en ala
Por armes prendre, et si les a!' (p. 41, ll. 6, 7.)

A la caisne u nous seymes
La vois del Saint Esperit oymes. (*Ib.* l. 13.)

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[1] *Sire, revenir*, is, of course, a bad rhyme, but if we find nothing but good rhymes, as said above, they cannot be Borron's.

'I think these last must certainly be a rhyme, the forms are somewhat unusual.'

Et si commanda Bron mon pere
Qu'il i venist en cestê terre
La u li solaus avaloit,
Et dist la vois que ne moroit (*D*)
Le rice Roi Pescheor
Dusqu'á tant que vous a se cort
Ariés esté, et quant vous i
Ariés esté seroit gari. (p 41, ll. 15-20.)

Ensi com il cevauçoient
Ja prés de lor castel estoient
Et joste un crois s'aresta[1]
U Perceval sovent ala.

Si vit venir .j. chevalier
Tot armé sor un destrier.

Molt hautement lor escria
'Por Diu dans chevaliers sacés
Le demisele n'en poés
(Plus avant) avuec vous mener
Se vous ne m'en calengier.'
Et Percevaus molt bien l'oi
Mais ainc mot ne li respondi
A son afaire pensis estoit. (p. 42, ll. 16-23)

I think there is quite sufficient evidence of the presence of a verse original, and further, that this verse original can be reconstructed with equal, if not greater, facility in passages where Wauchier offers no parallel, *e.g.* concerning the Grail, and the family of Grail keepers. Here, then, as in the preceding chapter, we must reject the theory of

[1] The verb should, of course, be in the plural, the fact that it is thus given in the text seems to testify to the influence of rhyme.

direct influence in favour of that of ultimate common source.

Perceval's second visit to the hermit uncle takes place at a much later point of the story, but, as in the case of the stag-hunt, we shall do well to examine the two parts in connection with each other, the more so as the second visit is very briefly related, and does not demand lengthy treatment.

After Perceval returns to the lady of the Chessboard we hear that he wanders for seven years, achieving numerous adventures, and sending more than one hundred knights prisoners to Arthur's court. Owing, however, to his continued failure to find the castle of his grandfather, the Fisher King (to which in the interval between his attempting, and achieving, the adventure of the white stag, he has paid an abortive visit), he becomes so mentally confused and distressed, that he forgets God, and Holy Church, and never enters a House of Prayer. On Good Friday he falls in with a party of knights and ladies in the guise of penitents, who rebuke him for riding armed on such a day. Perceval returns to his senses, makes his way, by the will of God, to his uncle the hermit, confesses to him, and remains there two months, according to *M.*

Here we find a discrepancy between *M.* and *D.*; the latter says that, after having made his confession, he announces his intention of visiting his sister, when the hermit tells him she is dead. Perceval is much distressed, remains with his uncle two days and two nights, and departs. In *M.* it is not till he is about to leave that he speaks of his sister, and learns that she has died some time since. Here *M.* is, I think, wrong; considering that the uncle lives within but a short distance of Perceval's home, he would hardly have delayed two months before asking

news. *D.* then places the reference to the sister's death rightly, but as both texts agree in saying that Perceval leaves the Hermitage on the octave of Pentecost, *M.* is correct as to the length of the sojourn.[1]

Both texts here insert a passage in which the writer apparently blames the poets who have treated the subject for the omission of this episode. *M.* gives the passage most correctly: '*Mais de çou ne parole pas Crestiens de Troies, ne li autre trovéor qui en ont trové por faire lor rimes plaisans mais nous n'en disons fors tant com au conte en monte, et que Merlins en fist escrire a Blayse son Maistre*,' etc.[2]

At first sight this is a most surprising statement, inasmuch as Chrétien relates a visit of Perceval to his uncle under precisely the same circumstances. He has wandered five years in neglect of God, and on Good Friday meets a party of penitents who rebuke him, and direct him to a hermit who proves to be his uncle. He confesses, is told that his sin in causing his mother's death is the reason for his failure in his quest, remains with his uncle over Easter, and departs, vanishing from the story, so far as Chrétien is concerned.[3]

[1] Two days before Easter, fifty days between Easter and Pentecost, and eight days for the octave, make exactly sixty days, or two months.

[2] Cf. *supra*, p 68.

[3] At this point, l. 7893, Chrétien takes up the adventures of Gawain, which are still in progress when his share breaks off abruptly, l. 10601. The *Perceval* adventures are not resumed till l. 21917; thus for over 14000 lines the original protagonist disappears from sight! In the Tournament section included in certain of the *Caradoc* interpolations (not in Mons), Perceval makes a fleeting appearance, but that is all. Apart from the episode we are now examining, which certainly derives from a source other than Chrétien, I think it extremely doubtful whether Wauchier's *Perceval* adventures represent in any way the version followed by Chrétien.

My view is that the passage in neither text stands precisely as it did in the prose original; the announcement of the sister's death should occur on Perceval's arrival, and before the mention of the length of the visit. *D.* is right here, but *M.* is right as to the length of the visit, and the wording of the passage, which is the addition of the prose redactor, and refers to the fact that while the original *Perceval-Grail* poem gave two visits to the uncle, at the second of which the sister's death was related, Chrétien and his continuators (for here Wauchier may well be alluded to) omitted either all mention of the sister (*Chrétien*) or any allusion to her death (*Wauchier*).[1]

The obvious fact is that the two passages stand in close relation to the existence of this character; where the sister is unknown the one visit to the hermit, who acquaints the hero with the news of his mother's death, and of his own connection with the Grail, is sufficient; where the sister was introduced, and the task of enlightening the hero on these points confided to her, it was only fitting that her disappearance from the scene should be accounted for, and who but the only surviving relative of brother and sister should be the channel of information? A passage omitted in *D.* throws a light on the connection between the sister, and Perceval's visit to his home. His uncle asks him if he will not go and see the 'manoir' which was his father's, and is now his. Perceval answers, not for all the riches of Arthur's kingdom, '*car trop aroie grant duel se je veoie le maison mon pere si vuidié de mes amis, que je*

[1] On the 'provenance' of this particular passage I find myself in agreement with Dr. Brugger (cf. *L'Enserrement Merlin*, i. p. 75). I think the allusion to Merlin may be explained by a desire to connect this passage with the chronicle source, by way of giving it more authority.

n'i trouveroie âme qui m'apartenist.'[1] But this is precisely what he did expect to find in Wauchier. Perceval only returns to his home in versions such as this and *Syr Percyvelle*, where there is an object to be attained by his doing so; where the home is deserted, and there is no point in bringing him back, he does not return; as *e.g.* in Wolfram.[2] Here then, neither Chrétien nor Wauchier can be held to be the source of the prose text, but all three testify to the existence of an earlier *Perceval-Grail* poem, reproduced, on the whole, faithfully by the prose, modified by Wauchier under the influence of Chrétien, and only known to Chrétien through the medium of a radically remodelled source.[3]

In the interview between Perceval and the Hermit we find the following verses:—

'Jou irai veoir me seror
Car je l'aim molt de buen amor.'

---

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 69.

[2] I cannot find any indication of such a striving after dramatic suitability as Dr. Brugger suggests. To my mind the only writer of the whole cycle who shows a real feeling for dramatic unity and construction is Kiot. The more I study the subject the more I am filled with admiration for the man who could construct a harmonious whole out of the welter of conflicting elements which make up the *Perceval-Grail* tradition. Borron was, I think, not wanting in constructive ability, but he lacked the patience, or perhaps the leisure, to perfect his scheme.

[3] I shall state my grounds for this opinion later on. Here I would only point out that the differences between *M.* and *D.*, and the manner in which the incidents are related in the first, testify to a fuller form of the story in the original prose. The reference to Chrétien is an obvious proof that, whatever the relation between the versions, it was well recognised by the writer of that passage that the connection was not that of source and derivative. Hoffmann's remarks here, and elsewhere, show him to be the belated adherent of a superseded method.

Et quant il Ermite l'oi(s)t
A plorer commença et dist :
'Biaus niés jamais le verriés
Car ele est morte saciés
Passé y a plus de . ij . ans. (*D*)
Quant je le seut molt fui dolans
Fis porter en mon edefi
Defors me maison l'enfoi.' (p. 69, ll. 4-10)

This last line is, I think, a proof of the dislocation of our text. Perceval could hardly have lived two months in the Hermitage without seeing, and making enquiry concerning, the tomb.

'A vostre congié m'en irai ;
Sacés jamais n'aresterai
Si arai trové le maison,
Le vostre pere mon taion.'
Quant li ermite l'oi si dist
Biaus niés Damdiu Jesus Christ
Vous i laist asener.'[1] (p. 69, ll. 28-32.)

[1] There are indications of rhyme throughout, but as the lines could be arranged in various ways, and the reconstruction does not appear certain, I have thought better to leave them. I would again draw attention to a feature I have already pointed out, *i.e.* the use by *M.* of the word *taion*, *taions*, which rhymes equally with *Brons*, *Bron*, or *maison* ; the constant recurrence of this word in this connection cannot be a mere coincidence.

CHAPTER VI

THE LOATHLY LADY

We must now retrace our steps to the point where Perceval leaves his sister, and recommences his quest. The succeeding adventure is again one which is related by Wauchier, but here, from the outset, we need have no hesitation in deciding that the story as preserved in the prose is, obviously, and demonstrably, a better and more primitive version than that given by the *Perceval* continuation. In each case Perceval meets a knight, accompanied by a lady of surprising ugliness; he shews amusement at her appearance, and is in consequence challenged by the knight, whom he overcomes and sends captive with his lady to Arthur's court. The second part of the tale (it is clearly divided into two sections) deals with their arrival at court, the sensation caused by the lady's appearance, Kex's mockery, and Arthur's rebuke for his discourtesy. Both versions end with the assurance that the lady was subsequently the most beautiful in the land: some of the Wauchier Mss. remark, naïvely, 'I know not if she were bewitched,' '*faée*.'[1]

The outline of the tale is in each case the same, but the details differ considerably. In the first place the description of the lady does not agree; Wauchier says:

[1] Cf. vol. i. pp. 259-60.

Si ceviel estoient plus noir
Que ne soit peine de cornelle,
Petit front ot et grant orelle,
Sourcius grans qui l'uel li vestoient
Que tout ensamble li tenoient;
Si oel furent noir com fordine
Qui n'affierent pas à mescine;
Ses nés retriçoit contremont
Qui petis ert, mais graindes sont
Ses narines qu'ele ot oviertes;
Si vous di bien a droites ciertes
Que lèvres ot grans et furnies
Plus grans que asnes d'abéies.
Dens avoit grans, jausnes, et lés,
Si ot genciules par dalés;
Grans grenons ot, et grant menton;
Del tout ert laide sa façon,
Avoec tout çou sambloit contraite,
Car crombe estoit et moult mal faite,
Delïié, et désafublée,
Et de nouviel estoit tonsée,
Le col avoit plus noir que fer
Bien sambloit dyables d'enfer. vv. 25388-410.

Our text says. 'Ele avoit le col, et le viaire, et les mains, plus noires que fers, et si avoit toutes les jambes tortes, *et si ouel estoient plus rouge que feus, et si avoit par vreté entre II. uels plainne paume.* Et por voir vous puis je bien dire qu'il n'en paroit sor l'arçon plus de plain pié, et avoit les piés et les jambes si croçues qu'ele ne les pooit tenir es estriers, *et estoit treçié a une trece, et saciés que le trece estoit corte et noire,* et miels resembloit a estre li keue d'un rat qu'autre cose ne fist.'[1]

Not only do the two descriptions not agree, but in

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 44.

certain points, which I have italicised, they positively contradict each other: nevertheless, when they reach the description of her fashion of riding they are in practically literal agreement—

> . . . trop cevauçoit ricement
> Sa jambe par conténement
> Ot sor le col del palefroi. vv. 25427-29.

'et cevauçoit molt orguelleusement, et tenoit se corgie en se main, et avoit mise par noblece sa jambe sor le col de son palefroi.'[1]

In Wauchier, Perceval only smiles, 'en sourrist . j . poi,' whereas in the prose he laughs heartily, and crosses himself three times. In Wauchier he simply remarks that the lady is ugly, '*laide est ele, n'ent doutés mie*,' in the prose he expresses his feelings with considerable detail, asking whether she be woman, or devil, and saying he would not be three days in her company, for fear lest she strangle him. The knight's indignation is amply justified, as also his assertion that, had the lady overheard, she would die of shame. There can, I think, be no doubt that here the prose version is derived from an original considerably fuller in detail than Wauchier.

But the difference is even more striking in the second part of the story, that relating the arrival of the knight at court; here the superiority of the prose text is incontestable, but this could hardly be demonstrated till we had the version of *M.* before us, as *D.* abridges notably at this point.[2] In Wauchier a number of Arthur's knights are at

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 45.

[2] Had Hoffmann, instead of simply noting the fact that Kex's rôle in *M* was much more important than in *D.* (*op. cit.* p. 35), given the details, Dr. Brugger (*op. cit.* p. 147), would probably have come to a

the windows of the hall, Saigremor is the first to see the lady, and draws Kex's attention to her. They exchange remarks, and Kex goes to tell the Queen: he says there are three hundred knights all so struck with the beauty of the lady that they vow from thence to Lombardy there is none fairer. He will say no more, she must come and see for herself, which she does. In *M.* Kex alone sees the knight, he runs to the Queen's bower, and tells her there is a damsel coming of such beauty no maiden at court can compare with her, he prays the Queen to do her honour, and retain her in her household, he would to God, in all good faith, that all the ladies of Logres were of such beauty! The Queen retorts, that would be embarrassing, as then he and other knights would take them from her, but suggests to her maidens they had better go and see for themselves. On beholding the hideous damsel all cross themselves, and burst out laughing. The Queen turns to her ladies saying, 'Now you may see that Kex loves us indeed, when he wishes us such great honour!' Then, and not till then, Kex calls the King and his barons. They come to the window, and the Queen tells them Kex's wish, at which all laugh heartily.

Now of all this spirited interlude between Kex and the Queen there is no sign in Wauchier, yet it is so thoroughly '*dans le cadre*,' and in keeping with Kex's character, that I cannot believe it to be a later addition to the tale; in

different conclusion. No more striking example of the stifling, and fettering, influence of the Foersterian school of criticism can be found than that offered by Hoffmann's Study. He had before him precisely the same material as that with which I am now dealing, yet he has found in it not one new idea, not one fresh suggestion. For him all imaginable sources are comprised within the range of extant Arthurian literature; and the possibilities of the hitherto unexplored *M.* text can be exhausted in 74 pp. of large print.

any case, the prose text does as a rule not make such additions.

The actual arrival of the knight and lady agrees closely, almost verbally, but again the prose version emphasises the part played by Kex. On the knight presenting his lady to the Queen, Kex bids her be duly grateful for so precious a gift, which will be the abiding honour of herself and her ladies. Nevertheless he fears, if she keep the maiden with her, that she may prove a rival in the affections of the king. He then asks the king to bid the knight say where he found the lady, if there be more of her like in that land, and if he could win such another were he to go thither? The latter part of the speech is shorter in *M.* than in Wauchier. I think any critic comparing the two passages will recognise that they must have been derived from a common source, which, as a rule, has been followed more closely by the prose, but which, in this particular instance, is better represented by the verse *Perceval.*

What follows is much better in our text. Arthur commands Kex to be silent, it is '*grans vilenie*' to mock a stranger knight, and he only makes himself disliked. Kex protests he is but paying a tribute to the knight's valour, had he led such a maiden to court, he would have feared lest she be taken from him! The King again orders him to be silent, greets the knight kindly, and bids him be of his household, his *amie* shall be of the household of the queen. The irrepressible Kex bursts out again, then the king must bind his knights over to keep the peace, else the lady will be carried off for her beauty before the hour is up, and the knight will surely hold Arthur accountable in which case he, Kex, will certainly not undertake to defend the king! Arthur, now seriously angry, swears by the soul of his father, that but for the oath he had sworn

to Entor he would deprive Kex of his office; then, frowning, he mutters to himself that he must needs put up with him, for all these evil qualities came from the woman who nursed him when he was taken from his mother for the sake of him, Arthur. Kex makes feint of being offended, and says that it was a bad day for him when he undertook to guard the king. The story ends with the assurance that the lady was, later on, the fairest known; the prose text as we possess it makes no suggestion of magic, but this may well have been in the original. The verse reconstruction yields good results:

Orguelleusement cevauçoit
Se corgie en se main tenoit,[1] (p. 45, ll. 1, 2.)

Perceval vit, si s'aresta
Et a mervelles se segna,
Se mist a rire molt durement; (*Ib.* ll. 6, 7)

Quant li chevaliers le vit rire (*D*)
Si en ot honte et grant ire; (*D*)
Si li demanda qu'il avoit
Qu'ensi segniés s'estoit,
Et pour quoi il si durement rist;
Et Perceval li respondist—(*Ib.* ll. 8-10)

'(Celi) qui tant me samble bele
Qu'il n'est dame ne demisele
En cest siecle (a trover)
Qui puist a li aparellier.
Saciés jamais ne mangerai
Si (sor vous) vengié n'arai;

[1] The adjective may have been *noblement*, or *ricement*, prefixed in each case by *molt*, but as the above is in both *M.* and *D.* it seemed best to adhere to it. The detail of the *corgie* is not in Wauchier.

Et si croi bien se vous autant
En aviés dit en son oiant,
Si grant honte avoir poroit,
Tant est honteuse, qu'ele moroit,
Je m'ociroi si ele moroit, (*D*)
Je vous desfi de ci en droit, (*D*) (*Ib.* ll. 23-30).

These last two lines might be—

M'ociroi por l'amor de li
De ci en droit je vous desfi.[1]

'En vo nom a voir et mençogne
Car Biaus Mauvais n'estes vous mie
Mais Biens et Biaus, se Dex m'aie.'[2] (p. 46, ll. 21-23)

'Avuec çou qu'ele a de biauté
A ele debuenaireté;
Saciés que j'ameroie miels
Qu'on me desevrast de mes uels,
Quar qui nos voudroit despartir (*D*)
Il me coviendroit morir.' (*D*)
'Par me foi donc il ne seroit
Cortois qui vous departiroit;
Mais il vous covient (adés)
Que par foi me fienciés
Vous irés a le cort le roi,
Vous rendrés prison de par moi.
Li demisele si menrés,
A le roine presenterés.'
Et li chevalier respont
'Il n'a buene cort el mont
Que je ne li ose mener. (pp. 46-27, 47 l. 5.)

[1] I avoid lines taken from the combat, both on account of the preponderance of verb rhymes, and also because, the fight being given at much greater length in Wauchier, it is possible that the prose version may not here have preserved the original.

[2] This is a bad rhyme, but the Wauchier version is also bad.

The parallel passages in Wauchier are rather differently placed; for that reason I have thought it better to give them consecutively after the prose version—

Percevaus dist 'Se Dex me voie
K'en vostre nom a mençogne,
Car je vous di bien sans aloigne
Que Biaus Mauvais n'estes vous mie
Mais bons et biaus,—de vostre amie.' vv. 25440-44.[1]

Dist Percevaus, 'Pecié feroit
Qui vous departiroit de li.' vv. 25576-77

Car avoec çou qu'ele a biauté
S'a elle debounaireté. vv. 25581-82.

Que je n'ose menei m'amie
En haute cort emperial (B.N. 12576).[2]

The second part of the story is even more fruitful in verse forms:

Quant Kex le demisele vit
Jus de le fenestre sali,

A courant en le cambre venoit
La u li roine estoit,
Si dist, 'Dame (sans targier)
Venés, ci vient uns chevalier,
Qui mainne une demisele
Onques nus hom veist plus bele.' (pp. 47,ll.18-23.)

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[1] The lines here are very awkward; I am inclined to think that the first line testifies to the presence, in the original, of the adjective *voir*. Perceval's remark in the prose that the knight's name is at once true and false, appears to be required by the conclusion of his speech. As noted above, the last line is, in each instance, unsatisfactory.

[2] Mons paraphrases this:

A ce, fait-il, ne sui jou mie
Eslongié de la compagnie (sa ?)
En haute cort emperial,

'Por Diu Madame or penser
De faire por li onerer' (*Ib.* ll. 24, 25).

Lors dist a ses demiseles
'Alons la fors por veir se cele
(Meschine) a biauté si grant
Comme Kex nous fait entendant.' (*Ib.* ll. 31-33.)

Molt si s'en esmervelliérent
Et a rire commenciérent,[1]
Li roine huça ses puceles,
Et dist tot riant, 'Demiseles
Or poés vous (toutes) savoir
Que Kex nous aimme bien por voir
Grant onor vous a sohaidié!' (p. 48, ll. 2-6.)

Atant vint le cevalier,
Descendi de son destrier
Se demisele en ses bras prist
Molt doucement à terre mist;
En le sale s'en vindrent andoi
Main à main devant le roi
Et li cevaliers s'aresta
En mi le sale, le salua
De par Perceval le Galois. (*Ib.* ll. 12-17.)

Here again we find at moments that the version of B.N. 12576 is closer to that of our text than is Mons.—

Kex a veü le meschine
Es cambres cort por la roine

Mons has 'vient a la roine.'

[1] The detail of crossing themselves may have been introduced in the prose, and suggested by Perceval's action; it is not necessary, and, whereas the other two phrases fall into rhythm, this is too short.

The arrival of the knight agrees closely :—

Est descendu, si a jus mise
Celi que il durement prise ;
Devant le roi en est venus,
Molt hautement li rent salus
De par Perceval le Galois. 25675-79.[1]

We return to the prose version :—

'Me demisele Rozain, qui tant
A le vis cler, que j'aim autant.'—(*Ib.* ll. 18-19.)

Quant Kex le senescal oit
Si ne se pot tenir, et dit
A la roine, 'Dame merciés l'ent,
Il vous a hui doné présent
Que vous l'en alés au pié ;
Tos jors en soiés onerée
Vous et les puceles autant
De vos cambres, et non por quant
Se vous le gardés j'aroie paor,
Le roi ne li donast s'amor !'
Et lors pria par cele foi
Que il li devoit, que li roi
Demandast que l'on li deist
U le chevalier le prist,
Et se il en plus i avoit
Et se il en trover poroit
Se il aloit. . . (*Ib.* ll. 20-29.)

[1] MS. 12576 is better in the second line : 'Celi qui molt durement prise' ; but repeats the adjective *durement* where Mons gives *hautement* ; so I have given the passage from Mons, as more available for reference.

The verse original is, I think, assured, but the reconstruction might, in certain cases be a little different:—

C'est grans vilenie de gaber
. J. estrange chevalier—(*Ib.* ll. 31, 33)

Vint au chevalier, l'acola
Sa prison cuite li clama. (p. 49, ll. 8, 9.)

It is unnecessary to pursue the process further; the original of this section of our romance was undoubtedly a poem, and as undoubtedly it was not in the form preserved by Wauchier, but a more detailed, and spirited, version. We note here precisely the same peculiarities we have met with elsewhere; lines identical with Wauchier side by side with lines introducing subjects, or details, not in Wauchier. Taking the parallel incidents, Stag-hunt, Perceval's Sister, and visit to the uncle, and the Loathly Lady, the cumulative evidence seems irresistible, we are here dealing with a group of stories drawn by two independent writers from a common source.[1]

A much more difficult matter is to determine what was the nature of that source. Can it have been a collection of separate tales? Hardly so, the coincidence of two writers selecting the same set of adventures, and adventures which in themselves have no connecting link, would be too extraordinary. As a matter of fact the one point common to the prose *Perceval* and the Wauchier continua-

[1] As stated in a note to chapter iv. I compared the versions not only with Mons, which taken by itself would hardly be a fair test, being on the whole the worst *Perceval* text, but also with the superior texts B.N. 12576, and 794. I possess besides detailed notes and extracts from all the *Perceval* MSS., and I nowhere find the correspondence between Wauchier and the prose closer than in the passages quoted.

tion is the personality of the hero; if the one version be not copied from the other, and the arguments in favour of their independence seem decisive, there seems no other solution possible save that both knew the stories in connection with their common hero, Perceval. Before I entered upon a study of this romance I should certainly have negatived the idea that this group of adventures had ever formed part of a *Perceval-Grail* poem, now I am by no means sure they did not. That Borron, for his 'Quest' section utilised an already existing poem I am convinced; that Perceval's sister, and the visits to his uncle, came from such a source I was certain; the Stag-hunt was, I hold, originally a *Perceval* story; only this Loathly Lady episode did not appear to belong to the same group. Yet it stood quite apart from either the *Chastel Orguellous,* or the *Chastel Merveilleus* sections of the Wauchier text; it resembles a *Gawain* story, its introductory portion must, I think have been a *Gawain* story, but as it stands, as we shall see, it is not that. Taking into consideration the fact that the *Perlesvaus*, which I hold to derive from the same original as our text, contains distinct traces of Perceval's connection with the Stag-hunt, and also relates an adventure with a knight known by the title of the Biaus Coars, I am coming to the conclusion that these adventures formed a genuine part of the early *Perceval-Grail* poem, which Borron was using, and from which Wauchier drew part, at least, of his Grail material.[1]

In each instance we find that the version of the prose text is the superior, and that largely by virtue of the diver-

[1] Cf. *Perlesvaus*, Branch II. 1; xii. 4; (Coward Knight) Branch IV. 5; xvi. 4. Also Dr. Nitze's Study on the *Perlesvaus*, pp 74 and 82-87. An interesting point with regard to the knight is that he is first connected with Gawain, then with Perceval.

gences from the form preserved by Wauchier. Thus the two parts of the Stag-hunt, which in Wauchier show no connecting link, are here knit together by the personality of the Fairy mistress of the Knight of the tomb, and her relationship to the lady of the Chessboard. Perceval's visit to his sister becomes clear and comprehensible when we grasp the fact that it is she who is to enlighten him as to his connection with the Grail, and the task assigned to him. When all references to the Grail are omitted, as in Wauchier, the incident becomes pointless.

Finally the superiority of the prose version of the Loathly Lady is most striking. The whole interlude between Kex and the Queen, of which Wauchier retains no trace, is entirely in accord with the traditional character of the former. In its original form this must have been an excellent story. But supposing that Borron and Wauchier alike knew the tale as a part of a *Perceval* poem, whence did it derive, and what was its original character?

Dr. Brugger refers me to a previous remark as to the similarity between this story and the English poem, '*The Weddynge of Syr Gawayne*,' using this as an argument against the *Perceval* derivation of the tale.[1] Here the critic is confusing between the original tale and the subsequent developments. That the story resembles that of the English poem is certain; for my own part I have little doubt that the *Weddynge* formed originally a part of the great *Gawain* compilation to which I have tentatively given the title of '*The Geste of Syr Gawayne*' (the existence of which Dr. Brugger fully admits); I would go further, and say that I hold the Loathly Lady to be always, and in every guise, connected, more or less closely, with Gawain. Her appearance in

[1] *Op. cit.* p 147.

Chrétien, whether she there originally derived from the *Chastel Orguellous*, or *Chastel Merveilleus* source, heralds the introduction of a series of *Gawain* adventures, and the disappearance from the scene, in favour of that hero, of the original protagonist Perceval.

Again, in the group of *Gawain* adventures, found in certain only of the *Perceval* MSS., we have a hideous squire, the pendant of the squire of Chrétien's *Chastel Merveilleus* section, again connected with Gawain.[1] Here, the lady and her knight appear to hail from Galloway, he is son to the Count of Galloway, which land is again closely connected with Gawain. Now the story in its primitive form I hold to be a 'Test' story, *i.e.* it records the reward of the valour, or courtesy, of a certain hero, by the transformation into a lovely maiden of a hideous hag, whom he has embraced (*Bel Inconnu*), or wedded (*Weddynge of Syr Gawayne*), from motives of valour, courtesy, or loyalty. Of this there is nothing here, our story deals with the sequel, the effect produced upon outsiders by the repulsive appearance of the lady. The *Weddynge* makes much of the sensation produced by her manners and appearance at court, our version motives her presence there, and that in a manner which can only have been connected with Perceval.

The knight appears as a prisoner, sent thither as the result of his attempt to punish another knight for his dis-

[1] Cf. vol. i. pp. 218-219. A comparative study of these monsters, their appearance, and mission, would be interesting, and would possibly yield important results for the evolution of the *Gawain* story *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, Maynadier (Grimm Library, xiii.), is a Study of the Loathly Lady theme. In my notice of the book (*Folk-Lore*, vol. xii., p. 373) I pointed out that the version of which Gawain was the hero appeared to be the most primitive.

courteous mockery of his mistress. The original adventure may be called the reward of courtesy, the sequel as here related is the reward of *dis*courtesy, and such reward could only be Perceval's! He is the one and only hero who can with impunity show a lack of courtesy and knightly breeding; and that because such lack was held to be the result of his exceptional training, and the primitive environment in which he had grown up. Perceval is not, like Kex (and here the difference is well emphasised), rude from sheer malice, and defects inherent in his character, his discourtesy was external, and recognised as in no way affecting his sterling qualities.

As I have before pointed out, although the *Enfances*, which explain so much in Perceval's character and conduct, have here been omitted, yet there are still hints of his characteristic simplicity retained.

The connection between the *Gawain* and *Perceval* stories still remains to be elucidated, and it is one of the most important problems of the Grail literature. That Gawain was the original Grail hero is certain, it is equally certain that in that rôle he was supplanted by Perceval, as this latter was, in his turn, supplanted by Galahad; but the exact process of supersession remains to be determined. Did Perceval take over the *Gawain-Grail* adventures, or was he from the first provided with a new series? I am inclined to think the first. I have come to the conclusion that the central idea of the *Geste of Syr Gawayne* was Gawain as Grail winner, and that adventures, which as now preserved, appear to have little connection with this theme, such as *Syr Gawayne and the Grene Knyghte*, really formed a part of it. I think the *Weddynge* theme may well have been one of the tests undergone by the hero, and that the Loathly Lady was recognised by the romance writers as

part of the Grail tradition.[1] When Perceval took over the Grail adventures, this story, in some form which we cannot now determine, formed a part of them, and it had to be altered in some way to bring it into connection with that hero. To me the present form betrays its origin clearly: it is a *Gawain* tale, into which Perceval has been introduced as '*Deus ex machina*,' to bring about the lady's presence at court. It was in this form, as a *Perceval* tale, that Borron and Wauchier, alike, knew it, and for critical purposes to-day we must so account it. At a later stage of our investigation we shall have a clear instance of the combination of *Chastel Orguellous* and *Chastel Merveilleus* themes, in which the rôle of hero has been transferred from Gawain to Perceval.[2]

The relationship between these two story groups is, so

[1] This would account for her appearance in the rôle of Grail messenger, a feature peculiar to the *Parzival*, and probably due to Kiot, who appears to have been well aware of the character of the material with which he was dealing.

[2] I cannot follow Dr. Brugger's argumentation as to the identity of Biaus-Mauvais, Biaus-Coars, Beaumains, Beau-Cûrs, and their connection with Gaharies, or Gareth. Biaus-Coars, and Laid-Hardis, are, I believe, titles for one and the same knight; (cf. references to Dr. Nitze's study given above). A passage in the *Perceval* continuations is here much to the point:—

> A la table reonde avoit
> Coustume que nul n'i seoit
> Se il n'avoit plaie en la chiére,
> S'en avoient en grant maniére
> Les chiére mult plus esfraées,
> Plus cremues, et redoutées.
> Li Lais Hardis s'est mis avant,
> Sachiez que ja parlast atant.—B.N. 12577, fo. 112.

This occurs at the opening of the *Chastel Orguellous* section, and the mention of this particular knight seems to me suggestive, a handsome youth might well hesitate to qualify! But no son of King Lot is ever described as a coward; whatever their faults, they are a valiant family.

far, not determinable; it seems probable that, while the *Chastel Orguellous* compilation[1] drew much of its material from the *Geste of Syr Gawayne*, the *Chastel Merveilleus* poem, on its side, utilised incidents belonging to the *C. O.* group. There is, in any case, no doubt that the *C. M.* was a *Gawain*-(Christian)-*Grail* poem, and I think we shall ultimately find that it exercised an important influence upon the final Grail development.

Nor does Mauvais necessarily = Coars, the name might be given for other qualities. Dr. Brugger suggests that the fact that the Biaus Mauvais is son to the Conte de Gauvoie would suggest that he was Gawain's brother; it would with more propriety suggest that he was his son. Lot is never ruler of Galloway, Gawain is; Gawain's son is known by a sobriquet also commencing with Biaus and is, further, the hero of a similar adventure, his bride being won in the form of a monster. There is just as much, or as little, ground for identifying the knight of our story with Guinglain, as with Gareth. (In Wauchier he says he is jealous even of his father; if he be Gawain's son, this is justifiable!) But if he is connected in any way with Gawain, then he is not the Biaus-Coars, as a reference to his adventure with that hero in *Perlesvaus* (referred to above) will show. If he be the Biaus-Coars he is neither Gawain's son, nor his brother. I may be too conservative in my treatment of proper names. I admit I am somewhat chary of meddling with them, but Dr. Brugger is, I dare to suggest, too adventurous In his hands any one name may become any other, or several others—even Ban de Benoic turns into Alain de Gomeret! Nor do I ignore Agravain, when I say that Lot had traditionally four sons (*Op. cit.* p. 144), Mordred is not always reckoned as Lot's son, and I suggested that the duplication of Garahies, Guerrehes, which Dr. Brugger admits, was due to the fact that the exclusion of Mordred would reduce the number to three. There must have been some reason for doubling the personality of the brother. (Cf. vol. i. pp. 247-8.)

[1] I cannot call *Chastel Orguellous* a *Gawain* '*Roman*,' as does Dr. Brugger (*Op. cit.* p. 159). To me the term *Romance* denotes form, it must have a beginning, and an end. As I pointed out in vol. i. (pp. 250-51) the *C. O.* compilation has neither; it is a collection of independent tales, the relative position of which might be changed without any detriment to their individual interest.

CHAPTER VII

THE FORD PERILOUS

THE adventure we are about to discuss, although it forms one of the most picturesque and well-told sections of our romance, is but short, and will not delay us long. We hear how Perceval comes to a ford, guarded by a knight, who forbids him to enter the water or allow his steed to drink, on pain of combat. Perceval naturally resents the prohibition; they fight, the knight of the Ford providing Perceval with a shield and spear, and the latter is, of course, the victor. He asks the knight his name, and his reason for thus guarding the Ford, and learns that he is Urbain, the son of the queen 'de la Noire Espine'; he dwells near at hand, with his mistress, in a castle invisible to all save themselves and their household. If he could keep the ford against all comers for the space of one [1] year, he would be the best knight in the world. It wanted but eight days to the end of the term, and now Perceval has ruined his chance; he may, if he will, take his place as guardian of the Ford.

[1] *D.* gives VII. years, he is within VII. days of the completion of his task; but inasmuch as *D.* has a pronounced partiality for the number seven, and the knight proceeds to tell Perceval he need only remain one year, the version of *M.* is probably correct.

While they are speaking a great noise is heard, and the air becomes black and thick with smoke. From the darkness comes a voice, threatening Perceval and bidding the knight hasten, on pain of loss. Urbain does his best to obey, but Perceval, anxious to know what is happening, holds him fast, whereon the warning is repeated. The knight falls swooning, and there appears suddenly a flock of black birds, which attack Perceval, flying round his head, and endeavouring to tear out his eyes. The knight, regaining consciousness, exclaims, 'Woe to him if he does not aid,' and recommences the combat. Perceval is well nigh put to the worse, so much do the birds interfere with his defence, he strikes at the one which is nearest with his sword, and, falling to the ground, it becomes a dead woman of surpassing beauty. The other birds surround the corpse, raise it from the ground, and carry it away leaving Perceval in bewilderment. The knight no longer resists, but yields himself captive, and Perceval demands the meaning of what he has seen. Urbain explains that the noise and darkness were caused by the destruction of the magic castle, the voice which summoned him was that of his Fairy mistress, and it was she and her maidens, who, in the form of birds, had come to his aid The slain maiden was sister to his mistress, but Perceval need not grieve for her, for she is already in Avalon. He prays leave to go, which Perceval grants, but scarcely has he turned to depart when he is carried off by his *amie* with rejoicing, and is lost to sight—Perceval goes his way, marvelling.

The corresponding adventure in Wauchier is of a *banal* character, the Ford is the Ford Amorous (this is called the Ford Perilous), and there is no fairy mistress; the maidens who instituted the adventure, and their lovers,

are alike ordinary mortals. It is generally admitted that here there can be no question of Wauchier as source.[1]

It is obvious that we are here dealing with a fairy mistress tale, certain elements of which are among the *lieux communs* of such stories. The circumstances under which Urbain meets his lady may be compared with those under which Carados finds Aalardin du Lac[2] in the adventure which forms a sequel to the 'Serpent' episode. There the hero, overtaken in the forest by a storm of rain, sees a knight and lady riding in full sunshine, and follows them to a castle. The lord of the castle, Aalardin, gives him a magic shield, by means of which the wound which his wife Guimier had received when rescuing him from the serpent, is healed. That Aalardin and his sister are fairies, or magicians, has previously been shown by the description of their wondrous pavilion. Here it is not said that the lady was outside the storm belt, but that was probably the case.

The conditions under which Urbain remains with her are identical with those imposed by the knight of the tomb. Here Urbain says of himself: '*Et je dis que je feroie se volenté, mais molt me seroit grief se je laissoie le chevalerie ester.*'[3] The knight of the tomb is reputed by his brother to have said, '*qu'il iroit tot la u ele le volroit mener par couvens qu'ele le menast en tel liu qu'il ne perdist se cevalerie.*'[4] In each case the lady provides her *ami* with a task to his liking, and an invisible dwelling. Here, '*le castel ne poroit nus veir fors moi seulement et m'amie et les demiseles qui avuec li sont*;'[5] the knight of the tomb;

[1] Wauchier, vv. 24180-356.
[2] Potvin, ll. 15426-640.
[3] *Supra*, p. 52.
[4] *Supra*, p. 64.
[5] *Supra*, p. 52.

'*cil castiaus seist dejoste le tombel, mais nus ne le puet veir.*'[1]

This theme of the fairy mistress and her knightly lover must have been exceedingly popular at the period when the Arthurian romance tradition began to take literary form; the founding of the Bridge Perilous, in Wauchier is another instance of the same theme, and we have besides the Lais of Guingamor, Guigomer, Lanval, and Graalent. In the later developments of the cycle the charm has vanished from these tales, and their original character has become obscured.[2]

But the distinctive feature of our story is the appearance of the lady and her maidens under the form of birds. Shape-shifting is elsewhere a characteristic of the fairy mistress; in the case of the knight of the tomb we found that she could at will assume the form of an old woman, but nowhere else in Arthurian romance does she take the form of a bird. So far as I have been able to discover, this power of assuming bird form appears to be somewhat closely connected with Avalon. In the *Vita Merlini*, Geoffrey, speaking of the 'Insula Pomorum quae fortunata vocatur' (*i.e.* Avalon), and the nine sisters who bear rule there, says of the chief of them, Morgen,

> Ars quoque nota sibi qua scit mutare figuram
> Et resecare novis quasi Daedalus aera pennis,[3]

In the *Prophecies of Merlin* we find Morgain sending her

[1] *Supra*, p. 65. An invisible dwelling for lovers is also found in the prose *Tristan*, cf. Löseth, par. 52. Here the fact that it is invisible is not stated, but it is so in the original text.

[2] Cf. Vol. i. pp. 266-67. The story of Morgain and Guiomar, as related in *Merlin*, and prose *Lancelot*, is an example of the degeneration of this theme. Cf. L. A. Paton, *Fairy Mythology*, chap. v.

[3] *Vita Merlini*, ed. Michel and Wright, p. 37.

messengers in the form of birds to convey the Dame d'Avalon to her presence.[1] Here the dead Bird-maiden is carried to Avalon; the connection can hardly be fortuitous.

A parallel to the rôle here played by the maidens is found in Owen's army of ravens in '*The Dream of Rhonabwy*.[2] So far as action is concerned the parallel is extremely close. Owen's birds 'with one sweep descend upon the heads of the men,—and they seized some by the heads, and others by the eyes, and some by the ears, and others by the arms, and carried them up into the air, and in the air there was a mighty tumult with the flapping of the wings of the triumphant ravens.'[3] Here, Perceval '*vit entor lui si grant plenté d'oisiaus que tous li airs entor lui en fu couvers, et estoient plus noir qu'onques rien qu'eüst veüe, et li voloient parmi le hiaume les uels esracier de le teste.*'[4] In *D.* the birds are '*grans, corsuz, et plus neirs que erre-ment.*'[5] All this corresponds closely with the ravens of the Mabinogi.

We have other Celtic parallels; Hennessy, in a study on '*The ancient Irish Goddess of War*'[6] connects the Celtic war Goddesses with the Crow (Hooded, Royston, or Squall-Crow), a form they not infrequently assumed. The Saga of Cuchulinn gives several instances of the appearance of the Morrigan in this shape. Mr. Hennessy also gives parallels from Scandinavian tradition; as *e.g.* the Raven

[1] I made my notes from the San Marco MS., referred to above. The episode is quoted by Sir Fred. Madden, *Syr Gawayne*, p. 325; it is also cited by Miss Paton, *Fairy Mythology*, p. 45 *n.*; cf. also 34 *n.* for the transformation of Arthur into a Crow, in which form he leaves Avalon

[2] Cf. *Mabinogion*, ed. Nutt, p 147.

[3] *Op. cit.* p. 158.

[4] *Supra*, p. 53.

[5] Hucher, p. 461.

[6] *Revue Celtique*, vol. i. pp. 32-57.

banner of the Norsemen described in Asser's *Life of Alfred*; if victory were to be their portion a live Crow would appear flying in the midst of the flag.[1] Lottner adds a note to this article in which he comments on the connection between Celtic and Germanic tradition, and gives examples of the Valkyrie appearing in the form of Crows.[2]

It is evident that we are here dealing with a very old story, and most probably, as Mr. Nutt suggested in his *Studies*,[3] one of genuine Celtic origin, although the possibility of northern influence must not be entirely ignored. The story is not, as we have said above, in Wauchier; it was certainly not invented by Borron; the question is, was it already connected with Perceval, or was he the first to connect it? And, in this case, whence did he derive it? I can see no reason for Borron either introducing the tale, or connecting it for the first time with Perceval; on the other hand Wauchier may very well have substituted a more directly chivalric adventure for this wild and primitive folk-tale. The one objection to its having formed part of the source common to both poets is that we have no trace of the story elsewhere, and a knowledge of this particular *Perceval-Grail* poem was certainly not confined to these two writers.

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 53.

[2] In my notice of Miss Paton's book (*Folk-Lore*, vol. xiv. pp. 437 *et seq.*) I pointed out the parallels between Morgain and the Valkyrie, who are also Bird-maidens, nine in number, and protect chosen heroes. At that time I had not read the article referred to, but I find Lottner draws the same parallels.

[3] *Studies in the Legend of the Holy Grail*, p. 129. Cf. also study on *Branwen, the daughter of Llyr* (*Folk-Lore*, vol. v.) I touched on this point in vol. i., in connection with the Grail Sword (pp. 149 151); there is no doubt that a study of the influence of Northern upon Arthurian tradition would yield valuable results.

The ultimate origin of such a tale can hardly have been other than that great body of Welsh Arthurian tradition the existence of which is, slowly but surely, being revealed to us. Little by little the veil is being lifted and here and there, in dim valleys, and on misty heights we discern the forms of these early Arthurian heroes, we see their movements, we hear at times their speech. The vision is not for long, the curtain falls again, but it is less impenetrable than it was of old, and we know it now for what it is, a veil merely, and no impassable barrier. For the present we must proceed with caution, and rest content with partial results. The evolution of such a tale as this cannot be followed with certainty, we must for the moment accept it for what it undoubtedly is, a survival of that early Fairyland which preceded the ordered and chivalric splendours of Arthur's kingdom.

The verse reconstruction of this section does not yield such satisfactory results as the preceding episodes; the whole adventure is so abridged in *D.* that little help is here to be obtained from that text, but inasmuch as there is here no question of derivation from Wauchier the reconstruction is of less importance.

Et dejoste .j. molt bele pré
Si i avoit .j. molt bel gué. (p. 50, ll. 4, 5.)

Vint au gué, et volt ens entrer,
Et si com il volt abevrer
Son ceval. . . (*Ib.* ll. 7, 8.)

'Por Diu dans cevaliers sacés
Que vous mar i estes entrés
Le gué comperer covenra!'
Atant a lui s'eslaissa. (*Ib* ll. 10, 11.)

'Quant je le vi si m'aroutai
De li ataindre me penai.' (p. 51, l. 20.)

'Quant ele me vit el chastel
Me fist le nuit molt rice ostel.' (*Ib.* ll. 25, 27.)

Et je meshardi tant le nuit
Que je l'amai, et li requist
S' amor, (le demisele) dist
Qu'ele volentiers m'ameroit
Par .j. covent qu'ele metroit. (*Ib.* ll. 27-29.)

Illuec demourer avuec li
Que je n'alaisse par le pais (*Ib.* ll. 31, 32.)

Ele dist, 'Biaus amis veés
Illuec .j. gué, et vous tendrés (p. 52, ll. 2, 3.)

De moi deduit avoir porés
Et chevalerie maintenrés.' (*Ib.* ll. 6, 7.)

Le castel ne poroit nus veir
Fors moi et m'amie seulement,
Et ses puceles (ensement). (*Ib.* ll. 10, 11)

'(Urbains) se plus i demourés
(A tos jors mais) vous me perdrés!' (p. 53, ll. 5, 6.)

Par devers lui s'en retorna
Plus de .c. fois li escria
Merci, se il plus demouroit
. . . il s'ociroit
Et lors r'a oie la vois
Qui li dist 'Urbains haste toi
U desormais m'arés perdu.' (*Ib.* ll. 17-21.)

(Commença) une joie molt grant
Et a rire molt durement.
Dist (as oisiaus) 'Dehait aie
Jou se je ne vous (viens) en aie. (*Ib.* ll. 29-31.)

Li oisel si cort le tenoient
A poi qu'il ne l'abatoient. (p. 54, ll. 6, 7.)

Fiert.j oisel . . .
Le tenoit trés parmi le cors
Si qu'il le bouelée fist salir ;
Et caī a terre, au cair
Si devint une femme morte. (*Ib.* ll. 8-11.)

L'oisel qui entor lui estoient
En arriére si traoient,
Et vers le cors se tornérent
Et en l'air l'enportérent. (*Ib.* ll. 13-15.)

CHAPTER VIII

THE VISIT TO THE GRAIL CASTLE

We now come to what is practically the *crux* of our investigation, the attempts of the hero to achieve the purpose of his quest, attempts which result first in failure, second, in complete success.

Perceval, leaving the Ford Perilous, comes to a cross, at the meeting of four roads, where stands a very fair tree. Looking up, he sees two naked children playing amid the branches.[1] (*M.* says of the age of .vi., *D.* as usual, .vii. years.) He adjures them by the Blessed Trinity, if they be of God, to speak with him. One of them answers that by leave of the Holy Spirit they come from that Terrestrial Paradise whence Adam was banished, to speak with him; they know him to be in quest of the Grail; if he take the road to the right he will, ere he leave it, find that by which, if worthy, he may end his toil. Perceval is for a moment lost in thought. When he looks up, cross, tree, and children have vanished, and he deems they were but an illusion: 'et douta que ce ne fust fanthosmes.'

As he hesitates whether or not to obey the directions, a great shadow passes before him (*M.* .iv. times, *D.* of course .vii.), and the voice of Merlin bids him follow the child's guidance. If he be 'preudom,' ere he leave the road, the

[1] In view of the information I now possess I have no doubt that this was a vision of the Tree of Life.

prophecy of Joseph will be accomplished. Perceval would fain have further instructions, but appeals in vain.

He therefore takes the road and comes to a fair meadow, through which runs a river with many mills; on the water he sees three men in a boat, and in the midst a very old man lying on rich cloths. (*M* tells us at once that this is the Fisher King, Perceval's grandfather.) The old man offers lodging for the night, and tells Perceval what direction to take in order to find his dwelling; he himself will hasten thither to receive him. Perceval rides some time before he sees any sign of a house, and begins to upbraid the old man for having misled him, when he sees the summit of a tower between two hills beside the forest he had traversed that morning, and repents him of having misjudged his host. At the castle he is well received, clad in a scarlet mantle, and conducted to a hall. The servants tell their lord that his guest has arrived, and he bids them carry him to the hall, where he welcomes Perceval kindly, and apologises for the infirmity caused by his great age. He asks him where he passed the night, and Perceval answers, in the forest where he had but poor lodging, but he was more troubled for his steed than for himself. The king says certainly he did not have all that was needful, and bids the servants make ready for meat.

As the first course is served there issues from a chamber a maiden richly dressed, with a towel round her neck, and bearing in her hand two little 'tailléors' of silver; she is followed by a 'vallés' carrying a lance from which fall three drops of blood (*D*. one drop); and a second 'vallés' bearing aloft the vessel given by our Lord to Joseph. The King and his household make reverence, and beat their breast (rendi se cope). Perceval marvels much, but is withheld from asking by memory of his mother's counsels

(*D.* of the old man who showed him), so says nothing although the King tries in various ways to provoke the question. Perceval, however, is so overcome with weariness that he well nigh falls asleep on the table, and his host sees his efforts are useless. The procession returns, and the King, abandoning hope of inducing his guest to speak, bids his servants prepare a couch, and takes leave of the knight.

Perceval is left alone, marvelling; servants come and aid him to undress; he sleeps till morning, and when he wakes, finds no one in the castle. His horse is freshly groomed, and his arms are ready, but there is no one to be seen. He thinks the household have betaken themselves to the forest in search of herbs, and determines to follow and ask the meaning of the vessel.

Now here the superficial critic at once says, the account is borrowed from Chrétien, and seeks no further.[1] As a matter of fact the parallels with Chrétien are fewer in number than are the divergences; this particular form is intensely interesting precisely because we find in it points of contact with the whole range of Grail literature.

To begin with, the children on the tree are found in a slightly different form in Wauchier.[2] After the adventure with Bagomedes, Perceval, riding through a wood, comes to a tree on which he sees a fair child, about . v . years old, holding an apple in his hand. Perceval salutes him, and asks if he be on the right road for the Fisher King's castle? The child will give him no information on this point, but advises him to go on the morrow to Mont Dolorous, when he will learn tidings to his profit. Climbing upstairs, he vanishes. Here the tree does not vanish, nor is there any

[1] Cf. Hoffmann, *op. cit.* pp. 46, 47.

[2] Cf. vv. 33765-836.

avowed connection with Paradise, though the apple is suspicious. Perceval later recounts this adventure to the Fisher King and receives a very pointless 'interpretation of edification,' which I suspect to be due to Wauchier himself. Here there can be no doubt that the prose version has the better form. There is no word of the shadow, or of Merlin, in Wauchier, but it is worth noting that the only adventure connected with Merlin in the *Perceval* continuation is precisely this adventure of the Mont Dolorous, to which the child directs Perceval. It was instituted by Merlin. The coincidence is, to say the least, curious!

Another point of contact with Wauchier is that when the King asks where he has passed the previous night, Perceval replies, in the forest.

Qu'il li die, ne li anuit,
U il avoit geü anuit :
Et il li dist en la forest.

Here :

U il avoit le nuit geu?
Et Perceval (respont et) dist
'Je iut anuit, se Dex m'aïst
En le forest.'[1] (p. 59, ll. 1, 2.)

The Grail procession, on the whole, corresponds best with Manessier. We have certainly in the first instance,

Par devant la table roiaus
Passa la lance et li Griaus,
Et *uns bons tailléors d'argent*,
Qui moult fu avenans et gent,
C'une demoisele portoit
Qui gentement se deportoit.

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 59.

But a little lower down we find:

> Biaus dous sire dist Percheval
> De la Lance et dou Saint Graal
> Et *des tailléors* k'ai veus.—vv. 24979-81.

which agrees with our procession.

In the *Chastel Merveilleus* version the procession consists of a vallet with bleeding lance, a maiden with '. j. petit tailleor d'argent,' two vallets with lighted candles, weeping maiden with Grail, and four serjants with bier, whereon lies a dead body and a broken sword.[1]

In *Perlesvaus* there are two maidens, one bearing the Grail, the other the Lance which bleeds into the Grail; there are attendant angels with candlesticks.[2]

In *Diû Crône* the procession has been much elaborated; we have two maidens with candlesticks, two youths bearing the Lance between them, two maidens with a salver of gold and precious stones, a crowned maiden with the Grail, here in the form of a reliquary, and behind her another maiden weeping. Thus there are six maidens and two youths. The sword has been brought previously.[3]

In Chrétien we have vallet with lance, two vallets with candlesticks, maid with Grail, and second maiden with tailleor d'argent.[4]

So far as our text is concerned it agrees with none, save only with Perceval's reminiscence inserted in Manessier.

[1] Vol. i. p. 221. [2] Branch vi. 19.

[3] Cf. *Arthurian Romances*, vi., where the adventure is translated in its entirety.

[4] This was apparently large enough for the 'hanche de cerf au poivre' to be carved upon it:

> Uns vallès devant lui trença
> Qui a lui traite la hance a
> A tout le tailleor d'argent.—vv. 4464-66.

One point which differentiates it from all the others is that it is a 'vallet,' and not a maiden, who bears the Grail.

In another point, that of the three drops of blood which fall from the Lance, our text agrees with *Perlesvaus* and *Diû Crône*. Chrétien has only one drop. Another point of agreement with the *Perlesvaus* is that there is here no mention of the sword.[1]

The slumber by which the hero is overcome finds its parallel in the *Gawain-Grail* versions; it is in Bleheris, and *Diû Crône* (where Gawain resists, but his companions are overcome), in *Chastel Merveilleus*, and in the account given by Gawain himself to his son.[2] This is the sole and only instance of its appearance in the *Perceval* form.

The actual point of contact with Chrétien is rather in the setting of the adventure than in the adventure itself; *i.e.* the hero's arrival and departure agree with Chrétien, though even here there are marked differences. In both Perceval finds the King in a boat upon a river, but in Chrétien that river is described as 'roide et parfonde,' and Perceval fears an attempt at fording it. The bank is rocky, thus:

> Ensi s'en va selonc la rive,
> Tant ke a une roce aproce
> U li euve atouce á la roce,
> Si que ne pot avant aler.—vv. 4173-75.

The King bids him:

> Montés vous en par cele frete
> Qui est en cele roce faite.—vv. 4206-7.

when he will see a 'maison' below him *in the valley*.

[1] The sword in *Perlesvaus* is that with which John the Baptist was beheaded. It has been won by Gawain, and brought by him to the Grail castle *before* he sees the procession; this is an important point

[2] Cf. B N. 12576, fo. 147. Also *Arthurian Romances*, vi. p. 80

In our romance he comes to 'une molt bele praerie, et au cief de cel pré si avoit une molt bele riviére (*D.* viviére), et molt rices moulins.'[1] The King tells Perceval 'Vous en irés contremont le riviere, et verrés mon castel la *amont* aparoir.' The respective writers of these descriptions had very different landscapes in their minds, the one pictures wild rocky scenery, the other a pleasant pasture land.

In Chrétien there are two men in the boat, one of them is fishing; in the prose, Perceval first sees three, and as they draw nearer, 'vit enmi le batel . j . molt viel home, gisant,' we are evidently meant to understand that from his position the King was not visible at a distance. Here he is not himself engaged in fishing, as in Chrétien, but from Perceval's remark later on his companions at least were so occupied. In Perceval the age of Brons is throughout insisted upon, he is not the *Roi Méhaignie* of Chrétien, his infirmities are due entirely to old age; in fact, unless I am very much mistaken, Perceval's host is here identical with the mysterious old man in the inner chamber, said by Chrétien to be the Fisher King's father. Chrétien has here separated the two personalities.

Perceval's annoyance at not being able to find the castle easily agrees almost verbally with Chrétien:

> 'Pesciére qui çou me desis
> Trop grant desloiauté fesis
> Si tu le me desis por mal'—vv. 4225-27.

In the prose, 'Preudom qui peschoies, maléois soies tu qui m'a gabé, ne fait a entendant cose qui voire ne soit.'[2]

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 57.

[2] Cf. *supra*, p. 57. Did the original run?—

> Et dist, 'Preudome qui peschoies
> Qui m'a gabé, maléois soies.'

His host does not await him in the hall, but is carried in from the adjoining chamber on his arrival. Their conversation, as we have seen above, agrees with Wauchier and not with Chrétien; nor do the subsequent details agree with Chrétien's version, if we except the reason given for Perceval's silence in *D.*, which both this text and Chrétien ascribe to the advice of the old man (Gornemans in Chrétien, the Hermit in *D.*). *M.* refers it to his mother's counsels.

Perceval's experiences on the morrow again agree in the main; he wakes, finds the castle deserted, but his horse and armour in readiness. In both Chrétien and the prose, Perceval expresses his intention of seeking the household in the forest, but in Chrétien he surmises they have gone hunting, 'por cers et bisses regarder,'[1] here, in search of herbs, 'pour cueillir erbe et autre cose dont il eussent mestier.'[2] In the prose there is no mention of the sudden raising of the drawbridge, nor of the mocking voice.

Now what are we to make of this perplexing 'mélange'? The romance is a short one. The adventure, related in full accordance with the general character of the text, shows no undue prolongation or superfluity of detail, and yet at this moment the writer practically finds himself in touch with the whole cycle of Grail castle experiences, with the *Gawain-Grail* visits, with Chrétien, with his continuators, with the *Perlesvaus*; the *Queste* alone seems to be excluded; and at the same time he differs from them all.[3]

How can we explain the phenomenon, for phenomenon

[1] V. 4573.

[2] Cf. *supra*, p. 60.

[3] *I.e.* in the fact that the infirmity of the King is due to old age, and not to a wound; and in the details of the Grail procession.

it is, that one short episode, in one short romance, should thus show an 'ensemble' of *données*, otherwise scattered over the whole cycle?

I believe that there is but one solution which will fairly meet the case, that which I have before suggested. Borron was not composing a *Perceval* Quest but utilising one already popular, and that, unless I mistake, was, if not the original *Perceval-Grail* poem, one differing but slightly from it. I cannot here go fully into the origins of the Grail legend as a whole, as the discussion of this point would lead us too far astray from the immediate object of our study, the sources of the prose *Perceval*. The general investigation must be deferred to the conclusion of our examination of Borron's *Quest* section, when it will be treated in a separate chapter. Here I would only state my views as to the general question of the *Perceval-Grail* quest.

I have said above that very possibly when Perceval first replaced Gawain as Grail hero, which I hold was only after the theme had become Christianised, (I do not believe in the existence of a non-Christian *Perceval-Grail* form), he may have taken over certain *Gawain* adventures, without much rearrangement or modification,[1] being subsequently provided with a series of adventures founded more or less directly on those already connected with his name. Of the first stage little trace remains, but there are indications

[1] The *Elucidation* is here very suggestive; the Grail visit which it describes is the Bleheris-*Gawain* visit, but we are told that Perceval had also found the castle, and had asked concerning the Grail and the rich cross of silver, but not concerning the Lance, or the broken sword on the bier—details belonging to the *Gawain* form alone, and never found connected with Perceval. In Gerbert he rescues the lady of Mont Esclaire, a feat otherwise attributed to Gawain.

of its existence, the second is well marked, and very largely recoverable.

The independent *Perceval* story was, I take it, then in a form very analogous to our *Syr Percyvelle*, and the conditions of the quest (Christian and mystical) involved drastic alterations in the tale. The '*Enfances*' disappeared altogether, so did the connection with Lufamour or Blancheflor (which, judging from *Syr Percyvelle*, was already in the story); the stag-hunt theme was utilised, as it offered a convenient framework for other adventures; a sister was introduced to act as intermediary between Perceval and the Grail.

But Perceval was too well known and too popular a hero for this version to meet with unqualified approval; it appealed to the apostles of edification, it did not satisfy the story-lover, or the story-teller, most conservative of folk! Therefore another *Perceval-Grail* poem was composed, in which, though the Grail was retained in place of honour, the setting was conformed to the *Perceval* story proper; *i.e.* the sister was dropped out, and the '*Enfances*' and Blancheflor restored to their original position. This poem may have been the *Bliocadrans*, in any case it was the protagonist of the group of which Chrétien and Wolfram are the brilliant examples.

We have thus two distinct families, both deriving from the same parent stock, but which I think we may eventually find it well to differentiate as (*a*) *Grail-Perceval*, (*b*) *Perceval-Grail* group, as the predominance of the two main elements shifts.

The one group is represented by the prose *Perceval*, *Perlesvaus*, part of Gerbert and *Queste*; the other, and from the literary point of view, far more interesting, by the *Bliocadrans* fragment, Chrétien, Wolfram, and a part of the

Gerbert continuation, which may be a portion of Kiot. Both groups have a certain number of traits in common, as deriving ultimarely, so far as the Grail is concerned, from a common source. It seems to me that if we can agree to recognise the existence of these two well-marked families we shall find many of our difficulties automatically disappear.[1]

A point upon which I am still somewhat in doubt is whether Borron did, or did not, know the parent version of *b*, *i.e.* whether the setting of the Grail-Castle visit belongs to the common parent of all, or merely to the protagonist of the *b*. group. I incline to the first as the more probable; on careful consideration I cannot find any proof of a knowledge on Borron's part of incidents decisively belonging to the *b*. group. I am the more drawn to this conclusion in that I am now of the opinion that the succeeding adventure, that of the Weeping Maiden, is not the adventure we find in Chrétien, but rather the source of that adventure. Here there is no slain knight to cause the maiden's grief, it is due entirely to Perceval's failure to ask the question which would have restored the Fisher

[1] Gerbert's continuation is in the light of this suggestion peculiarly instructive After his account of the marriage of the hero and Blancheflor, and prophecy of the future glories of his race, there is an abrupt break. Gerbert, naming himself, explains that he has now completed his *laisse* according to *la vrais estoire*, and explains at what point he took up the story, and the method followed, *i.e.* that of selection, 'de son sens extrait le rime que je vois contant.' He then announces his intention of completing the history of Perceval, and proceeds with a series of adventures agreeing with those of the *Perlesvaus*. That there is here a change of source is certain, and also that Gerbert considered the source from which he drew his earlier section of superior authority to that used for the later. It is obvious that from the point of *Perceval* tradition the *Perceval-Grail* romances are to be preferred to the *Grail-Perceval*, and so Gerbert thought.

King to health (*D.* to youth) and have put an end to the enchantments of Britain.[1]

Now here, I think, the maiden does not represent the cousin of the hero, Sigune, in the *Parzival*, but rather the Weeping Maiden of the Grail procession. I have elsewhere drawn attention to the persistence of this feature, and its importance as evidence of the original signification of the story.[2] It would be strange if Borron, who certainly understood the real character of the material he was handling, should omit the weeping maiden or maidens; taking the whole question into consideration, I am of opinion that, for very good and sufficient reasons, he removed the feature from the actual Grail procession, placing it at the end of the adventure, and motived the grief, the original ground for which had disappeared, by the failure of the hero to achieve his task.[3]

Here, as elsewhere, we shall do well to treat the two sections of the story together, but before passing to the

[1] This is a point to which attention should be drawn; throughout our romance these enchantments, and their conclusion as a result of achieving the quest, are constantly referred to, but there is no hint given as to their nature. Apparently, from the introduction to *Mort Artus*, their cessation involves a lack of incitement to knightly adventure, but our text gives no episode other than those usual in any chivalric romance. The allusion has undoubtedly been taken over from a form in which the term had significance. In my opinion the enchantments of Britain equals the Wasted Land, which is found in the earliest form of the story. Where this no longer exists the allusion is meaningless.

[2] Cf. vol. I. p. 331. Also 'The Grail and the Rites of Adonis,' *Folk-Lore*, September 1907.

[3] I am of opinion that when our task is completed it will be possible to trace the gradual evolution of this incident to what may be termed its apotheosis in the beautiful episode of Sigune and Schionatulander.

final visit, it will be desirable to examine such traces as there may be of verse form, and see if they do or do not correspond in any way with Chrétien's poem.

'Biaus sire chevalier, vous irés
Contremont (l'eve), et vous verrés
Mon castel amont aparoir,
Et je m'en tornerai (por voir)
(Sans targier), si m'en irai,
Encontre vous estre volrai,
Atant Percevaus s'en torna,
Selonc le riviére cevauça
Ne onques de le maison del roi
Pescheor (son taion) ensagne voi. (p. 57, ll. 18-23)

Si riche, si bele, com a devise,
Et les loges molt bien assise.[1]
Quant il le vit si se pensoit
Que preudons i converser doit ;
Castiaus a rois miels le sambla
Qu'a pescheor, si s'aprocha
Trova la porte desfermée
Et le pont (tot) abaissié. (p. 58, ll. 5-10)

Et quant li vallet l'aperçurent
Encontre lui si s'en corurent,
Le prisent par son estrier
Et l'aidiérent a desarmer.
Ses armes en le sale portérent ;
Doi vallet son ceval menérent
Et l'establérent molt ricement.
Perceval en monta a mont,
Et uns vallés li aporta
.j. mantel (cort) si afubla,
Et puis l'enmena seoir enmi
Le sale en .j. molt rice lit. (*Ib.* ll. 11-18.)

[1] Probably the original word was *tor* which would require the singular verb and be correct.

The agreement with Chrétien here is only general; as noted before, his host in C. awaits him in the hall, there is also a description of his dress, of the great fire burning, the company, etc., all of which is lacking here.

> De trés grans maladie plains
> Ne pooit remuer piés ne mains. (*Ib.* 21, 22.)

Chrétien's king, who is suffering from a wound, is otherwise in possession of his bodily powers, and is not an old man.

> Dont il estoit hui venu,
> U il avoit la nuit geu?
> Et Perceval respont, et dist:
> 'Je iut anuit, se Dex m'aist,
> En le forest, u jou oi [1]
> Molt pesme ostel, car jou i fui
> Molt a mesaise.' (*Ib.* ll. 31, 32; p. 59, ll. 1-3.)

We noted above the parallel here with Wauchier; Gerbert, in the same connection, says:

> Je giut anuit dalez . j . hous
> En loriere de la forest.[2]

thus preserving the same idea. In Chrétien and Wolfram, on the contrary, Perceval comes direct from Biaurepaire, where he has lived for some time. I think that in the original Grail tradition the quester came to the castle after more or less prolonged wandering in the wilderness, that its position was less accessible than is indicated in the *b*. group.

I have noted above the divergences from Chrétien in

[1] *Oi* here seems to have no sense, but it is in the text, and I think its presence testifies to an original rhyme.

[2] *B. N.*, 12576, fo. 220.

the description of the King, the general incidents of the visit, and the form of the Grail procession; the one real point of contact here is in the lines:

> Qu'il ne fust mie trop parlans
> Ne trop des coses demandans.[1] (*Ib* ll. 23, 24.)

advice assigned by *M.* to his mother, by *D.* to the 'prodome qui l'avoit confessé,' thus according with Chrétien:

> Que del casti li souvenoit
> Celui ki chevalier le fist
> Ki li ensengna et aprist
> Que de trop parler se gardast. vv. 4384-87.

The version of *M.* I hold to be the original; it was borrowed from the genuine *Perceval* story as a reason for his silence had to be given, and in that genuine *Perceval* story there was no old knight to instruct in chivalry, no uncle, no one but the mother to counsel The *D.* copyist changed the passage under the influence of *b.* The point of the question, and the motive for its being withheld, is of cardinal importance; we shall eventually see that the operating cause is the success or non-success of the sword-test; the two are organically connected, he alone who can re-solder the sword is in a position to ask the question. But for grounds inherent in the nature of our version the sword-test is here omitted, and another reason for Perceval's silence had to be found. It was found by Borron, or his predecessor, in the counsels given by the mother in the genuine *Perceval* tale; the connection with the old knight came in later, with the development of the second group.

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 59.

The question is no 'harmlose Erfindung' of Borron or another, but an essential element of the Grail tradition.

The reason for the repeated procession of the relics is here given :

Et ensi porter les faisoit
Aux chevaliers qu'il herbergoit,
Car Nostre Sire Jesus Christ
Li avoit mandé, (et li dist)
Que ja(mais) garis ne seroit
Devant qu'uns chevaliers aroit
Demandé qui on en servoit,
Et cel chevalier couvenoit
Le mellor del monde ester ;
Perceval meïsme doit l'achever. (p. 60, ll. 2-6.)

It is quite possible to reconstruct further, but with a distinct preponderance of verb rhymes ; readers anxious to do more can test the text for themselves.

The interview with the maiden also furnishes us with lines :—

(Ensi) molt tenrement ploroit,
Et un molt grant duel faisoit ;
Com ele vit Percevaus, si tot
S'escria au plus haut qu'ele pot,
Et dist 'Perceval li Galois (*D.*)
Caitis soies tu, et maleois. (p. 61, ll. 13-15.)

Tu a esté a le maison
Le Roi Pescheor ton taion.
Et a veü par devant toi
Le vaissel passer par trois fois.[1] (*Ib.* 17-20.)

[1] This is not a good rhyme, but it is one Borron would have employed.

Et saces que tu viendras (*D.*)
Encore, du Graal demanderas' (*D.*)

(Atant) Perceval cevauça
(Et prist) la voie qu'il cuida.
Mener le deust a le maison
Le Roi Pescheor son taion (p. 62, ll. 15, 16.)

Here again we have little in common with Chrétien; the relationship between Perceval and the Fisher King is constantly insisted upon; the result of his asking the question would be to restore the King, who is suffering from extreme old age, to youth; the lady is no relation; there is no suggestion that here the hero learns his name for the first time, in fact the one and only point which they have in common is that in each case the hero is reproached for not having asked a question, the asking of which would have brought happiness to himself and others. There is no borrowing here.

The conclusion of the adventure is not reached till after the successful issue of the search for the Stag's head, the second visit to the Hermit (both of which have been already discussed), and the Tournament at the Blanc Castel, an examination of which we will postpone till the next chapter. But here a link between the two visits should be noted, in each case it is Merlin who intervenes, and sets the hero on the road to the Grail castle.

In the first instance, as we saw, it was the voice of Merlin speaking from a shadow (the shadow of a cloud?) which decided Perceval to take the road indicated by the mysterious children. Here Merlin himself, in the guise of a woodman, appears, rebukes Perceval for having transgressed his vow by remaining two nights with his host, and foretells

his arrival at the Grail castle, which he reaches that same day.

This seems to me of extreme importance, as an indication of the general unity underlying Borron's scheme. It is, I think, an error to speak of the *Merlin* section merely as forming the transition stage between the *Joseph* and the *Perceval*; it is far more than that. Merlin is the connecting thread which from beginning to end links the story of the Grail and its Keepers with the *pseudo-historic* Arthurian tradition. (As connected with Gawain it must of course have been a part of the *romantic* tradition.) It is Merlin who announces the presence of the Grail in Britain, and the responsibility laid on a knight of Arthur's court of achieving the high Quest. It is he who prepares the test of the elect hero's fitness in the Siege Perilous; he who watches over that hero, and sees that he is not led too far astray by the pressure of other, and more alluring, adventures; he who undertakes the task of relating Perceval's feats to the scribe who shall put them on record; he who, when the task is finally fulfilled, brings all the threads together. Merlin has guided Perceval to the Grail castle; he informs Arthur and his knights of the successful issue of the Quest, and brings to Perceval the tidings of the tragic ending of the Round Table. Finally he brings Blayse, all these things duly written, to the presence of the Grail, and, his work accomplished, takes leave of the world, and retires to await the final Judgment in his 'espluméor' at the gates of the Grail castle.

It is on the personality of Merlin that the unity of Borron's trilogy depends, hitherto the point has scarcely been sufficiently brought out, but with the light thrown by the *M.* text on Borron's chronicle source, his importance becomes far more apparent.

But to return to the final and successful visit of the hero to the Grail castle. The events preceding the asking of the question are very briefly related; Perceval arrives at the castle, and is led to the hall, where he finds the old King (he does not enter from an inner chamber, as in the first visit). They speak together, meat is served, and with the first course the Grail procession issues from a chamber, Lance, Grail, and the maiden bearing the little 'tailléors.'[1] Perceval at once asks '*Qui on sert de ces coses?*' *i.e.* not of the Grail alone; immediately the Fisher King is changed in nature and appearance, and becomes '*Sains comme pissons*,' an expression the exact force of which cannot be determined. Perceval acquaints the King with his identity, that he is the son of Alain, and his grandson Brons leads him before the Grail, tells him of the Lance (note that the Lance, of which there is no mention in *Joseph*, is here placed first), it is the Lance of Longinus, then of the Grail, giving the punning explanation of the word '*Qu'il agrée a tous preudomes.*'[2] He then prays for direction, and a Voice from Heaven bids him teach Perceval the secret (or sacred) words committed to Joseph in prison by Our Lord. Brons does so, and further tells Perceval how he himself had seen Christ, alike as Child and Man, of the details of the Passion, and the Burial by Joseph. Perceval is filled with the Holy Ghost, and receives the precious Vessel, from which issues so ravishing a melody and a perfume that it seems as if they were in Paradise. On the third day Brons lays himself down before the Grail, with outstretched arms, as on a cross, and expires. Perceval, beholding, sees a vision of David with his harp, and attendant angels, bearing censers, who await the soul of

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 82.

[2] Cf. *supra*, p. 82.

Brons, and accompany it to the presence of the Lord.[1] The same day the gulf which opened beneath the Siege Perilous closes, and Merlin announces to Arthur the accomplishment of the Quest, and the termination of the enchantments of Britain. All this recital is, in itself, simple and straightforward; there are, of course, points which are not clear, such as the nature of the change which the King undergoes when the question has been asked, and the extraordinary length of life attributed to him. In *D.* this feature is hardly more than suggested, in *M.* it is insisted upon. Brons is a contemporary of Our Lord; he saw him as a Child, as a Lad in the Temple, he beheld the Crucifixion, and knew at first hand the part played by his brother-in-law, Joseph. Instead of evading, by omission, the consequences which the relationship between Brons and Joseph entails, *M.* as we may say 'dots the i's,' and will not allow us to ignore one of them. Hoffmann considers that the difference is due to the scribe of *M.*[2] I am convinced, on the contrary, that the details were in the original source, and depend upon the original conception of the Fisher King; when we know who, and what, this mysterious personage is, the difficulties and apparent contradictions disappear.

With regard to the secret words (I think this, and not 'sacred' is the correct adjective) confided by Joseph to Brons, and by Brons to Perceval, these again hang together

[1] The construction placed by Hoffmann on the phrase, 'l'enportérent en la maisté du ciel avec son pére que il avoit lonc tans servi,' is, I think, wrong. I do not believe there is here any question of Brons' natural father, much less a borrowing from Chrétien; as suggested above, the father in Chrétien is no other than Brons himself. I think we have only to write Pére with a capital P, and the difficulties vanish; Brons is transported to the Divine Presence, it is very simple.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

with the true nature of the King and the Grail. Here I would only say they certainly are not, as too often assumed, the Words of Consecration of the Holy Eucharist. Setting on one side the awkward fact that the formula of Consecration is not, and never has been, secret, we should be face to face with the absurdity that if the writers of the romances had so understood them, they must have written under the conviction that a true Succession, and a true Eucharist, no longer existed, since in no case is there any suggestion of transmission beyond the elect hero, Perceval, or Galahad. I am aware that certain writers of the occult school do not shrink from such a conclusion, but protest the existence of a Secret (spiritual) Church, and a Secret (spiritual) Succession, but they lack the full courage of their opinions, and take good care not to say when, and where, the outward Succession lapsed. Was it in the time of Arthur? *i.e.* the fifth century? Or was it at the conclusion of the natural term of life of the third elect Grail holder, whenever that may have been? And is it conceivable that the writers of the romances, who are so strongly impressed with the necessity of the due reception of *Corpus Domini*,[1] were really guilty of the atrocious hypocrisy of thus exalting a rite which they knew no longer possessed a saving grace? To state in plain terms the position is to refute it. No, let us once and for all drop the idea that the secret words have this special connection with the Eucharist; what they are, and what they connote, may indeed only be fully

[1] It is a general characteristic of the romances that, though the rules governing the relation of the sexes are, judging from our standpoint, curiously lax, there is always an insistence on the observance of the two Great Sacraments of the Church. To be unbaptized is to be outside the pale, and the knights invariably attend Mass, especially before a combat.

understood by the initiate, but, as we shall see, those outside that inner circle can have a very just comprehension of their general meaning.

With regard to the actual circumstances of the death of Brons I would here draw attention to the concluding passage of the Berne MS. 113, the peculiarities of which have before now been the subject of comment.[1]

I stated in vol. i.[2] that I did not think that these lines were the genuine conclusion of Wauchier's poem, but were the addition of the copyist, under the influence of the prose *Perceval*. I am now inclined to ask whether they may not rather be an abridged version of the poem which I assume to underlie the prose redaction with which we are now dealing. The passage certainly agrees in a remarkable manner with the general données of our text.

It will be remembered that in Wauchier the sword is brought, and Perceval almost, but not entirely, succeeds in resoldering it. The King tells him he is very valiant, but has not yet done enough:

> Sai ie molt bien qu'en tot le mont
> De trestos ciaus qui or i sont
> N'a nul qui mieus de vos i vaille,
> Ce sai ie bien, trestot sans faille;
> Mais n'avés pas encor tant fait
> Que Damedex doné vous ait
> L'onor, le pris, le cortoisie,
> Le sens, de la chevalerie,
> Que nous puissons dire entre nous
> Que le mieldres soies de tos
> De totes les hautes bontés.[3]

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[1] Cf. Rochat, *Ueber einen bisher unbekannten Perceval le Gallois*. Zurich, 1855.

[2] Cf. vol. i. pp. 26, 274.

[3] Cf. Rochat, p. 89.

Perceval sighs heavily, discouraged; all gaze at him, then we read:

Li rois le voit, molt a grant joie,
Ses . ij. bras al col li envoie.
Comme cortois et bien apris,
Puis li a dit: 'Biaus dous amis
Sire soiés de ma maison,
Je vos met tot en abandon
Quanque jo ai sans nul dangier.[1]

Why the King acts thus it is impossible to say; Perceval has not fulfilled the test; whether the quester failed by much or by little does not signify, if he have not soldered the sword, he cannot ask the question.

Here it is generally admitted that Wauchier's share in the story comes to an end, the sword is carried out, '*Et Perceval se reconforte*'—this is Wauchier's last line. Immediately afterwards we are surprised to find that he asks concerning both Lance and Grail! In the continuation by Manessier, which most frequently follows, we then have a long account of the origin of the Grail, the Lance, the parentage of the Grail-bearer, and the broken Sword, which last is connected with the treacherous murder of the King's brother, Goon Desert, or Gondefer (I am not at all sure that this last is not the correct form); not till Perceval has avenged his death will his task be achieved, and the King healed. Here, then, asking the question has no effect.

In the Berne MS. it is quite otherwise:

Aprés li a dit Perchevaus
Qui tant estoit preus et loiaus,
Que del Graal vuet il fis estre,
Cui en en sert, et que puet estre.

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 89, 90.

Li rois saut sus isnelement,
Tos est garis, nul mal ne sent,
Puis dit; 'Amis or m'entendés,
Et vostre non ne me celés
Dites le moi, iel vuel oir'—
Et cil respont; 'A vo plaisir
Percheval voir suj apelés,
A Sinadon la fui jo nés,
Et mes peres, par verité,
Alains li Gros fu apelé.'
'Ha, Percheval ti' es mes amis,
Alains le Gros il fu mes fis,
Enigeus ot non sa mere
Et Josef si refu ses frere.[1]—

The King then informs Perceval concerning the Grail, and tells him that he must be crowned king, for that he himself will only live three days. He takes him before the Grail, crowns him, and his subsequent death is simply noted without detail.

All this concluding part is very brief, but from the moment of asking the question it will be seen that the correspondence with our text is remarkably exact. In both the King is at once healed, in both the parentage of the hero is immediately declared; in the prose text Perceval volunteers the information, here he is asked, which I think is more likely to be correct. Berne is more detailed, but as we have remarked more than once, the original of *M.* and *D.* must have been a fuller text than either of our extant versions, and the verse form from which that original was drawn may well have been even fuller. Berne has a somewhat mysterious line 'adont en vait a son erale,'[2] preceding the investment of Perceval

[1] *Ib.* pp. 90, 91. [2] *Ib.* p. 91.

with the crown and relics; this would agree with his betaking himself to the Grail for counsel, as he does in our text. In both, the King only lives three days after his healing, though Berne gives no details of his death as does the prose. The version is certainly abridged, but I can see no reason why it should not represent the same original as that at the root of the prose *Perceval, i.e.* Borron's *Queste* poem. In this section the following seem possible lines:

'Biaus niés saces que ce est ci
Li Lance dont Longis feri
Jesus Christ, et icil vaissiaus
Qui l'on apele li Graaus,
Çou est li Sans, que recueilloit
Joseph, quant Ses plaies decouroit
A terre, por çou l'apelons
Graal, qu'il agree as preudons.

A Nostre Segnor proierai
Que je de toi faire porai.'
Atant Brons s'agenoilla (*D*)
Devant son vaissel et pria
'Biaus Sire Dex, si voiremens
Com çou est Vostre Beneois Sans
. . . . . me fu donné
De Joseph, et que j'ai gardé
De puis en ça, me faites vrai
Demonstrance que j'en ferai.'
La Vois del Saint Esperist
Lors descendist, et si li dist
'Brons, saces que li prophetie
De Joseph sera acomplie. (p. 82, ll. 20; p. 83, l. 6.)

Devant son vaissel, se couça
En crois, illuec devia. (p. 84, ll. 2, 3.)

Et li encantement chairent
Par tot le mont et derompirent. (*Ib.* 8, 9.)

L'en aporta ciés le maison
Li roi Pescheor qui avoit non
(Desci en avant) Perceval
Et demoura (avuec) le Graal. (*Ib.* 18-20.).

I would here draw attention to the fact that this transportation of Blayse by Merlin is repeated at the conclusion of the *Mort Artus*; I am inclined to think that here it is in its original place, and that the genuine *Queste* poem so ended, Merlin playing a rôle less important, probably, than that assigned to him by Borron, but still one of considerable significance. Borron seems to have used the poem pretty much as he found it (in any case he did not make any alteration in a point which was of far more importance, *i.e.* the Grail), he needed Merlin to introduce and round off the concluding section of his trilogy, and I suspect he paid little attention to the repetition involved by retaining the original conclusion of the *Queste*. The fact that the two passages are practically identical is, I think, a clear proof of the utilisation of existing material; had the work, from beginning to end, been that of one hand, the author would hardly so have repeated himself.

CHAPTER IX

THE TOURNAMENT

In the previous chapter we discussed the closing episodes of the Grail quest, as related in the prose *Perceval*; but the final scene is preceded by an adventure which demands consideration, the Tournament at the Blanc Castel. After his second visit to the Hermit, Perceval meets a party of squires (*M.* . iv., *D.*, as usual, . vii .), carrying shields, and leading chargers, pack-horses, and carts laden with lances. Perceval asks whither they go, and to whom the armour belongs? They tell him they are the squires of Meliandelis (so written in *M.*),[1] and are on their way to a Tournament at the Blanc Castel, the châtelaine of which has promised the hand of her daughter, a maiden of surpassing beauty, to the winner. Meliandelis, who has long loved the lady, hopes to be the victor.

Perceval asks the date of the Tourney, and if there will be many there? The squires tell him three days hence, and all the knights of Arthur's court will be present, as they returned at Pentecost from the quest of the Grail, wherein they have gained nothing.[2] Perceval says he does not

[1] Cf. the form Brandelis, *i.e.* Bran de Lis, in *Chastel Orguellous*, vol. i. p. 301 *et seq.*

[2] There seems to be a confusion here, an ordinary quest lasts a year and a day; the *Siege Perilous* adventure took place at Pentecost, consequently on the face of it it looks as if the events of our romance

think he will take part, and the squires applaud his decision, assuring him he would win no honour if he did.

They part, and Perceval, riding on his way, comes to the house of a vavassor whom he finds seated on the bridge, accompanied by squires, and watching the knights who pass for the Tourney. Perceval is kindly received and welcomed by the host, and subsequently by his wife and daughters. The host begs him to accompany him to the Tourney on the morrow, which Perceval is willing to do but refuses to bear armour.

The first day's fighting is described, honours are divided between Meliandelis and Gawain; the maiden of the castle upholds Meliandelis as the better knight, her mother, Gawain.

The second day Perceval takes part in the Tourney, wearing as badge a sleeve given him by the elder daughter of his host. Meliandelis and Gawain are now on the same side, and Perceval ranges himself in opposition to them. He performs prodigies of valour, overthrowing all he meets, even Gawain. He leaves the field without revealing his identity, and rejoins his host with whom he is about to return to the castle, when Merlin appears, as we noted in the previous chapter, and upbraids him for breaking his vow; he has already passed two nights in the same place, and proposes to pass a third. Perceval admits his fault, but says he had not thought about it! After sundry obscure speeches Merlin reveals his identity and foretells Perceval's arrival at the Grail castle, which, as we have seen, he reaches the same day.

had passed within the year; but Perceval has been wandering for several years, as we learn from the visit to the Hermit, and the reference to the number of prisoners he has sent to the court, and Arthur's remarks thereon, agree with this.

Now it is not surprising that, in view of the meeting with the squires and the prominent part taken by Meliandelis, critics have hitherto assigned the source of this adventure to the *Perceval* of Chrétien. On consideration I have come to the conclusion that Borron was drawing neither from Chrétien nor from Chrétien's immediate source, the *Chastel Merveilleus* poem, but from a version of the great *Chastel Orguellous* Tournament, combined with elements which finally gave the *Chastel Merveilleus* form.

In the introduction to the *Chastel Orguellous* tournament, which in Wauchier is won by Perceval, that hero comes to the castle of an old knight, Briols de la Forest Arsée, whom he finds on the bridge. He is kindly welcomed and entertained by the host, his wife, and daughter. Perceval apparently makes advances to this latter, as he asks her if she has a lover? She says, No, she is too young—Perceval, we are told, would fain have seen more of her. The host tells him of the great tournament, and advises him to attend it, if he can cross the Bridge Perilous, which is on their road thither, he will undoubtedly win it and prove himself the best knight in the world, when he can, with full assurance of success, continue the Grail quest.

Perceval agrees, and on the morrow they ride together till they come to the Bridge Perilous, a half-completed structure, which, when the elect knight essays to cross, swings round with a *brait*, enabling him to reach the other shore. Perceval crosses triumphantly, leaving his host to await him on the other side. (I am inclined to think that this may account for the inactivity of the host in the prose version. We might reasonably expect him to aid Perceval or prove his valour in some way, but he is never mentioned.)

The Tournament,[1] which is described with much picturesque detail, lasts two days, on each of which Perceval distinguishes himself mightily, unhorsing the most valiant of Arthur's knights, Kex first of all, of course,[2] even Lancelot and Gawain! Finally he rides off the field leaving his identity still a mystery, though Arthur and Gawain have done their best to discover who he may be.

I think it is certain that the setting of our adventure, in any case, has been taken from the *Chastel Orguellous*, and not from the *Chastel Merveilleus* Tournament. It is also certain that in both cases the original protagonist was Gawain.

Again, if there be points of contact with the *C. O.* form, there are also marked divergences from that of *C. M.* as preserved by Chrétien and Wolfram. The occasion of the tournament is different; here the lady of the castle, anxious to find a fitting husband for her daughter, is the instigator; there Melians de Lis, a suitor for the hand of the elder daughter of the lord of Tintaguel, challenges the father, his aforetime guardian. Gawain, journeying to Escavalon, is mistaken for a merchant, and his reluctance to fight, caused by his fear of being delayed 'en route,' leads to his scornful treatment by the elder daughter. The younger, a mere child, takes his part, and having been chastised by her sister in consequence, appeals to Gawain to act as her knight, and avenge her on her sister's champion, which he does, overthrowing Melians de Lis, and winning the Tourney.[3]

[1] W. 28485-600, B.N. 12576, fos. 122 vo. 131. The description of the Tournament is here much fuller than in Mons. Cf. also vol. i. pp. 266-69.

[2] Kex is much 'chaffed' at having been overthrown at the first joust; cf. here his boast of winning the Tourney.

[3] Vv. 6206-7031.

Critically examined, our version yields far more points of divergence from, than agreement with, Chrétien, and it seems probable that we have here, in the prose text, a section of extreme value, representing an original *Gawain* adventure, belonging primarily to the *C. O.* group, worked up into the *C M.* poem, and which, in an intermediate stage, became connected with Perceval. What the precise relation between the *Chastel Orguellous* and *Chastel Merveilleus* '*Gawain*' poems may be, it is not possible with the evidence at our disposal to state. The first was certainly a collection of short independent stories, the main body of which I have characterised as '*The Geste of Syr Gawayne*'; the second was a complete and coherent poem, but whether the *données* of the latter were derived mainly and directly from the former, or whether they were drawn from other sources, and had passed through an intermediate stage, it is as yet impossible to say.[1] The

[1] I have been reproached with obscurity and confusion in dealing with these two story-groups, and the reproach is in a measure justified, but could it well be otherwise? A few years ago, when it was held by many that the process of Arthurian romantic evolution lay complete before us, that Chrétien was the starting-point, and that before him there were no Arthurian romances, the matter was comparatively simple; we had all the material, and need only attempt this or that combination—the combinations, it must be admitted, did not always work out very convincingly. Now that we are practically of one accord in allowing that our extant literature stands at the end, and not at the beginning, of the evolutionary process—a view held alike by such scholars as M. Bédier (*Roman de Tristan*, Société des Anciens Textes Français, vol. ii. p. 154), where he suggests that during the century which intervened between the Norman conquest and the first poem of Chrétien there was developed *toute une première floraison de poèmes Arthuriens*); and Dr. Brugger (op cit. p. 144, where the critic expresses his conviction that the creative period of Arthurian romance was at the commencement of the 12th, or even at the end of the 11th century)—and the ground is thus

present adventure seems certainly to point to an intermediate process. A point generally overlooked by the conservative critic is, that even did the incident show more points of contact with Chrétien than it does, it would not therefore be proved that our romance derived from the poem, for this Meliandelis Tournament was in the source common to Chrétien and Wolfram, and Borron might have taken it direct from that source. In the *Parzival*[1] it is treated with a skill and charm distinctly superior to the French version. Nowhere does Gawain appear to greater advantage than when, with a keen sense of humour and a gracious courtesy, he is playing up to the little maiden's amusing assumption of grown-up dignity. The whole episode is delightful, and due to the sympathetic insight of a far finer poet than Chrétien. The story there belongs without any doubt to the *C. M. Gawain* poem; here the setting is that of the *C. O.* Tournament; what has determined the introduction of Meliandelis[2] here we cannot

encumbered by the remains of this '*première floraison*,' and '*creative period*,' the case is very different. Only a very rash critic would venture to propose a scheme covering, *without hiatus*, the ground between the admitted existence of short tentative Arthurian poems and *Lais*, and the perfected flower of Arthurian metrical romance. I, for one, should not dare to essay such a task! I can only express my opinion that the *C. O.* compilation stands at the one end, the *C. M.* at the other, of the constructive period, and that between them is a gap which at present it will be wiser not to attempt to bridge. I feel sure that Dr. Brugger is right in suggesting that *Diû Crône* will here afford valuable material, probably the Dutch *Walewein* will also aid us, but for the moment I fear we must be content simply to accept the fact of the existence of the two story-groups, without determining their exact relation.

[1] Cf *Parzival*, Book vii.

[2] I have noted, vol. i. p. 307, the fact that this family of Lis appears to be closely connected with Gawain.

tell, but it looks as if the episode had been introduced from an independent source, and points to a stage of evolution anterior to the *C. M.* poem. It is worth noting that our romance gives no other instance of a *Gawain* adventure being utilised; if Borron had either Chrétien, or Chrétien's source (*C. M.*), before him here, why did he restrict his borrowings to one adventure, and practically spoil that by the omission of its most characteristic features?

I have above[1] remarked on the value probably to be attached to the *Chastel Merveilleus* poem; I would here emphasise those remarks. The more closely I study the fragments which remain to us, *i.e.* the passages in MSS. B N. 1450, 12576, and B. M. Add. 36614, the more I become convinced that we have here the remains of the work of no mean poet. These 'purple patches' are due to no copyist. I would here ask critics to consider whether it be not possible that the superior charm of the German rendering of this and other *Gawain* episodes may not be due to the fact that this version more closely reproduces the original source?[2]

One thing is certain, the *C. M.* poem was a *Gawain-*

[1] Cf. also vol. i. p. 223, where I suggest that the pseudo-Grail section in *Peredur* is borrowed from this version.

[2] Vol. i. p. 114. A point overlooked by my critics is that in each instance, *i.e.* Confession and Lamentation, the versions of the other MSS. show distinct signs of abridgment; I have noted this in my chapter on the subject, but the evidence can only be fully appreciated by actual comparison of all the texts. I noted the fact (in the chapter devoted to the discussion of the MSS), that Borel, while making frequent quotations from this section of his *Perceval* MS., also quotes lines from the Guiromelant episode of a *Gawain* text. This seems direct evidence as to the independent existence of the *C. M.* as a *Gawain* poem.

Grail poem; as such it would be anterior to the *Perceval-Grail* poems; these in their earliest form do not appear to have been genuinely characteristic of that popular hero, but to have contained much matter originally connected with his predecessor; the *C. M.* version seems to me likely to afford valuable material for the tracing of the later development of the Grail cycle.

Whatever the source whence Borron derived this episode, it was originally in verse:

> Le rois molt forment l'en blasma
> Et plusors fois l'en gaba,
> Et li rois Artus bien le dit:
> 'Si Perceval noveles oit
> Del tornois, et il i venoit
> Le pris (emporter) bien poroit. (*D*)
>
> Que il n'a esté a se cort
> Et cuide bien qu'il soit mort. (p. 71, ll. 16-22.)
>
> Molt est damages si ensi
> Biaus chevalier n'a proece en lui.' (p. 72, ll. 18, 19)

(The remarks I have previously made as to descriptions of combats apply largely here; we can find numerous verb-rhymes) The meeting with Merlin was in verse:

> .j. hom venir viel et barbu,
> Et estoit bien revestu,
> Et faucheor bien sambloit
> Car a son col un forc portoit.
>
> Et vint encontre aus et prist
> Perceval par le frein et dist. (p. 79, ll. 22-25.

Dist a son oste 'Sire alés
Vous ent, al ostel m'atendés
Et je un petit parlerai
A cest preudom, puis vous sivrai.'

Li vavasseres s'en torna
Et Perceval (1) demoura (p. 80, ll. 13-17.)

Lors dist Merlin 'Je m'en irai
Ja mais a toi ne parlerai.' (p. 81, ll. 14, 15.)

In the previous chapter I have commented on the rôle here played by Merlin. His shape-shifting power is frequently manifested for the benefit of Uther, Arthur, and the youthful knights who attach themselves to Arthur's cause,[1] but elsewhere we never find him interesting himself in Perceval. His connection with that hero I hold to be external and secondary, he is really acting as a link between the Grail and Arthur's court, and it is only in his character as Grail Winner that Perceval has any interest for him. Whence Borron derived his *Merlin* material is a question of extreme interest and importance, but one which at this moment it will be well not to discuss; it belongs more especially to the chronicle section of our romance. On consideration it has seemed to me better to separate these two parts of our study, and to discuss the general question of the source and evolution of the Grail tradition, before touching on the question of the chronicle version utilised by Borron. The matter involved is of very different character; at this moment we are in touch with Grail ideas, with which we have been dealing at considerable length, and it seems to me that we shall do well

[1] Cf. *Merlin*, ed Sommer, pp. 67, 68, 79 (Uther); 130 (Arthur); 191, 194, 204, 215, 219 (Knights).

to grapple with the problem while the details are fresh in our mind; if deferred to the conclusion of the study we should probably find some difficulty in withdrawing our attention from the entirely different problem presented by an examination of the *Mort Artus*. I therefore propose in the following chapter to treat of the Grail tradition in its '*ensemble*,' examining it by the light of certain new and striking evidence. It is possible that we may then find ourselves in a position to determine the relationship and order of our extant Grail romances.

CHAPTER X[1]

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAIL TRADITION

MANY interpretations of the Grail legend have already been essayed, and, if in this chapter I venture to attempt another, and one differing both in character and scope from any hitherto suggested, I am impelled to do so mainly by the fact that recent developments and discoveries have for the first time given us a definite *point du départ*, and in so doing, have provided us with a certain basis upon which to construct our theory.

Hitherto the main obstacle to any satisfactory constructive scheme of Grail romantic development has been the very serious difficulty of determining the relative priority of the versions; we have had absolutely no definite 'data' upon which to work. Hence the fact that every complete scheme proposed, such as that of Birch-Hirschfeld, or Nutt, is bound, from tendencies inherent in the initial conception of the critic, to start from, and terminate at, different points. True, the MSS. containing the poem of Chrétien de Troyes and its continuations are, in point of date of transcription, our earliest extant

[1] This chapter, before being sent to the press, was submitted to a mystic of experience, and returned to me as a correct and 'good' account of mystic belief and practice. My readers may, therefore, rely upon the accuracy of the facts given therein.

texts,[1] but it was impossible to study Chrétien's version without becoming aware that its obscurities and omissions (to say nothing of the parallel text of Wolfram von Eschenbach) testified to the existence of other versions. It was noticeable too, that versions of the Grail adventure given by Wauchier not only connected it with a hero whose priority of fame over Perceval was assured, *i.e.* with Gawain, but also related the adventure in a form at once simpler, more picturesque, and less affected by Christian symbolism.

With the discovery that the section of Wauchier's text devoted to Gawain was ascribed to the authority of a certain Bleheris, a Welshman, the investigation took an important step forward; if Bleheris were the French form of the Latin Bledhericus, and the Welsh Bledri (or Bréri), it became highly probable that the author referred to was none other than the Bledhericus fabulator, mentioned by Giraldus Cambrensis, and in that case, whatever his date, it was certainly anterior to that of Chrétien de Troyes.

Here I do not intend to enter into a discussion as to the identity of Bleheris; new and most important evidence on this point has been discovered by Mr. E. Owen, of the Cymmrodorion Society, and as the credit of the identification is his, to him should belong the priority of publication.[2] This much, however, in the interests of our present dis-

[1] We must not forget that, with the exception of the Riccardiana, probably our oldest text, the majority of our earliest MSS., such as B. N. 12576, Edinburgh, B. N. 794, and B. M. Add. 36614, contain either the continuation of Wauchier, or that of Wauchier and Manessier; the first two contain both, and 12576, as is well known, has also Gerbert, and is our only really complete Codex. Thus, so far as date of transcription is concerned, there is no difference between Chrétien and his continuators.

[2] Mr. Owen is, he informed me, preparing an Article on the subject, in which full details as to the Charters, etc., will be given.

cussion must be said: if Mr. Owen be correct, Bleheris is Bledri, son of Cedivor, a Welsh chieftain, and firm friend and ally of the Normans, mentioned in the *Brut y Tywysogion* (of an important section of which Mr. Owen holds him to have been the author), and in certain charters, where he bears the title of *Latinarius*, the Interpreter. This individual lived between the years 1091, when, on his father's death, he and his brothers succeeded to his lands, and 1147, when his name is mentioned on the Pipe Roll as recipient of a payment. The names of the French knights with whom he was in contact, and who appear as co-signatories of the charters, may assist us to determine the nature of his connection with the Count de Poitiers, who, if this identification be correct, must have been Guillaume VII., the Troubadour (1086-1126). This Bledri is found in communication with the family of Giraldus, and that the *Interpreter* is one with the *Fabulator*, there can, I think, be no reasonable doubt.[1]

Thus, from the point of date, we are justified in regarding the Bleheris *Gawain-Grail* visit as representing the oldest extant form, and in making it the starting-point of our investigations, and this view is considerably strengthened if we examine the character of the story.

Some years ago I was impressed with the resemblance

[1] That Bleheris was, as Dr. Brugger thinks, an Anglo-Norman, is on the face of it impossible, the name alone is sufficient evidence Nor do I think, had he been a court poet, the author of the *Elucidation* would have referred to him with such respect as 'Master.' It seems certain, however, that Bledri was a more popular name among the Welsh than we had previously supposed. I make no apology for having suggested Bishop Bledri. In the present state of our knowledge the only way in which we can arrive at a conclusion is to examine carefully the claims of any individual of the name who possessed definite literary or linguistic qualifications. I built no theory on the possible identification.

between the incidents here related and the details of the particular form of Nature worship exhaustively studied by Dr. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, but while the relative position of this version remained undetermined, it would have been rash to draw any conclusion from the resemblance. With the discovery of the authorship and probable priority of the Bleheris form the question assumed another aspect, and in the concluding pages of vol. i. I outlined what I believed to be the true theory of the Grail legend. These views I subsequently developed in a paper read before the *Folk-Lore* Society in December 1906, which, in a revised and somewhat extended form was published in the organ of the Society in the following year.[1]

As the study in question is easily available I do not propose to repeat it in detail here; the main lines of my argument were as follows:—

The incidents of the story; the dead body on the bier, with its pomp of ritual accessories, the weeping women (who figure persistently throughout the Grail story); the common feast with a mysterious Vessel; the question as to the significance and use of which results in the restoration of Vegetation to a land waste by reason of the death of him who lies on the bier (whose identity is never declared); all suggested the rites celebrated in honour of the god of Vegetation, known in different lands by different names—Tammuz, Osiris, Attis, Adonis.

In these rites the death of the god, and resultant death of Vegetation, were mourned with solemn ritual in which women took a prominent part; with his restoration to life fruitfulness was restored to the earth. Not merely did the

[1] Cf. '*The Grail and the rites of Adonis*,' Folk-Lore, vol. xviii., Sept. 1907.

incidents correspond, but also the object of those incidents; it is a parallel alike of action and intention.

But here a certain difficulty presented itself; about the whole legend of the Grail, as we possess it, there hangs an atmosphere of mystery and awe. We are dealing with the 'secrets of the Grail,' concerning which no man may lightly speak on pain of incurring loss. He commits a great sin, and a great evil (*grant péché et grant mal*) who deals with them, save at the fitting time and place. Further, the story of the Grail visit is the story of an initiation *manquée*.

The late Professor Heinzel had already suggested this; whether he knew, or only surmised, I cannot say. In my paper I only suggested what, however, I knew to be an absolute fact, for so surely as a Grail romance, no matter which, falls into the hands of one who possesses first-hand knowledge of these questions, so surely is the story recognised for what it is.[1]

But these Vegetation rites were, and are—for these practices still survive—performed openly; how then were these two points to be reconciled?

I had already detected that the Lance and Cup,

[1] I made this discovery accidentally, having lent the Volume of *Gawain-Grail* visits (*Arthurian Romances*, VI.) to one whom I did not then know to be connected with Occult views and practices. It was returned to me with the remark, 'This is the story of an Initiation told from the outside.' I subsequently tested this by lending the book in a quarter where I had reason to suspect such knowledge; it was returned to me with the same assurance. The readers, in either case no Grail students, were perfectly familiar with the imagery. Some months after the reading of my Grail paper I learnt that I had had among my hearers one, who, as initiate, knew the symbols well, and further knew them to be in some way connected with Vegetation, how he had never been clear, but in his own words. 'When I heard your paper I began to understand.' These facts of personal experience cannot be ignored.

apart from the Grail figure in the Bleheris version, were Phallic symbols, and a further study of these cults brought out the fact that they were in their essence Life Cults; it was not the mere fact of the provision and deprivation of physical food which awakened everywhere, and on the part of every folk, rejoicing and lamentation, but the fact that on that food Life depended; the life of the Vegetation god meant the life of men, his death their death And so closely intertwined were the conceptions of animal and vegetable life that it was almost impossible to celebrate rites of this character without their assuming a form at once more objective, and less innocent. This is fully admitted by students of the subject; and in Dulaure's work on '*Les Divinités Génératrices*,' a work which is still of value in the field of anthropological research, the writer gives details as to the extent to which the worship of these Nature and Vegetation deities became merged in, and identified with, Phallicism.[1]

Here, then, was our key. Ritual capable of such developments was naturally under the ban of the Church. Christianity once in possession, such celebrations could only be carried on in a 'hole and corner' fashion, and not to every one witnessing, or sharing in them, would their real significance be explained.

Here, too, so it seemed to me, we had at last an explanation of that mysterious text, the *Elucidation*, which relates how at one time there were maidens dwelling in the hills, who would come forth and offer refreshment to the passer-by, but when King Amangons offered violence to one, and took away her golden cup, they ceased to do so, 'and the court of the Fisher King could no longer be

[1] Cf. Frazer, *Attis, Adonis, Osiris*, p 5. Also Dulaure, *op. cit.* 69, 70, original edition.

found.' Nevertheless, Gawain found it,—and then follows a summary of our Bleheris *Gawain-Grail* visit, which is also ascribed to Perceval, the text, as preserved to us, having been worked over to serve as an introduction to Chrétien's poem.

This may well be the symbolic manner of stating the fact that in consequence of an insult offered to the priestess of these rites by a local chieftain, they ceased to be celebrated openly; such a story would form a fitting introduction to the account of the chance visit to the Temple of this Cult, our Grail Castle.[1]

But another point must also be taken into consideration; if the esoteric teaching connected with these rites had been exclusively of a Phallic character, the Grail story could hardly have assumed that lofty and spiritual colouring which differentiates it from all other legends. I think there can be no doubt that this esoteric interpretation was of a double character, that behind instructions as to the source of animal life there lay loftier and more abstract speculations on the source of the spiritual life.

It seems to me that hitherto we have failed to grasp the link connecting alike the Philosophy and Theology of the past, the property of the few (the Intellectuals, or the Elect) with the Custom and Practice of the many (the Folk). At the root of all, behind the Wisdom of the East, enshrined in the systems of Plato and Aristotle, pervading all the complicated imaginings of the numerous Gnostic sects of the early Christian centuries, behind the practices of Mediæval, and post-Mediæval Occultism, Alchemy, Astrology, Rosicrucianism,—what you will—there lies the ceaseless, strenuous endeavour after the one goal, a determined effort to discover what Life is, to reach, if possible,

[1] Cf. on this point my Study in Folk-Lore.

its ultimate and inexhaustible source. I believe myself that the Vegetation rites will be best understood if we take them as the concrete and popular form of expressing this eternal idea, the Quest for Life.[1]

I hold then that the 'Adonis' rites, as fitly represented, had a triple character; there was the external ritual, setting forth in objective parable the natural processes of Vegetation, understood and shared by all; and there was secret teaching, probably ritual, of a two-fold character, Phallic and Philosophic; in both these instances tests were required from the aspirant, physical tests probably in the first case, a severe mental training in the second.[2]

But having established this threefold order we become aware that our ritual corresponds, with curious exactitude, to the dominant idea of Mediæval Symbolism and Mysticism, that of the triple character of all action. Man moves in three worlds, or on three planes, all that concerns him passes on these three planes, and affects him in a three-fold manner.[3]

[1] *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, Mead, is on this point worth consulting, as it gives summaries of the teaching of the leading Gnostics, and translations of the remaining fragments of their writings. The correspondence of certain of their speculations with ideas preserved in the Grail romances is curious.

[2] I am informed that initiations always take place on the plane on which the knowledge is to be attained, which seems reasonable.

[3] These Three Worlds of Man are the root principle of Occult Philosophy; cf. here Cornelius Agrippa, *La Philosophie Occulte*. The opening chapter of his first Book lays down the fact of their existence, stating that 'chaque inférieur est gouverné par son supérieur, et reçoit ses influences,' vol. i. p. 224; he refers to Aristotle as saying that three is the law according to which all things are governed. In vol. ii. (I am quoting from the French edition of 1727) he discusses in detail the importance of the number Three and gives the Names of the Three Princes of the World, whom he identifies as

These three worlds, or planes, may be expressed in varying terms. The most obvious and practical Triad is that of God, Man, Matter, *i.e* pure Spirit, Spirit conjoined with Matter, and pure Matter. Each had its corresponding colour, White, Red, Black, or Green; these two last being the Earth colours, are interchangeable.[1] Not only do these three worlds influence each other, but action on the one plane, or world, is reflected on the others, and each object has its corresponding image.[2]

These statements supply us with the material for our examination of the nature Cults, as providing the imagery of the Grail romances.

Analysing the ritual we find that there was not one vessel, but three, or rather one vessel in three aspects, depending upon the plane on which the instruction was given.

On the middle plane, that of Humanity, or Actuality, on which the external rites were celebrated, we have of course

God, Thought, and Spirit. This same idea runs through the Gnostic teachings, and is especially insisted upon by Basilides, whose Three Rulers present a curious analogy with the three Grail winners of the *Queste*. (Cf. Mead, *op. cit. Basilides.*)

[1] In the very detailed notes upon my *Adonis* paper, communicated to me by a Mystic of experience, these three worlds were designated in various ways. The above appeared to me the best for critical purposes. So far as the colours Black and Green are concerned, I learnt some years ago that in Alchemy they connote the same idea (Alchemy being only another form of the Life Quest). The same rule is recognised in Art, where Black and Green, being the earth colours, are held to be a more harmonious combination than Black and Blue, earth and sky.

[2] This of course strikes at the root of the real difference between the Mystic proper and the ordinary man, not necessarily a Materialist. To the Mystic the events on this plane are only correspondent results of the realities above.

the Vessel of the ritual Feast, the Feeding Vessel, called by Bleheris with perfect correctness the '*Rich*' Grail; on the plane below, the corresponding Vessel was the Cup, with its companion symbol the Lance, from which it received the Blood, the source of animal life;[1] above, on the highest plane, is the '*Holy*' Grail, the ultimate source of Spiritual, undying, Life, invisible under normal conditions—the vision is only vouchsafed as the reward of severe testing.

And each stage has its Guardian—on the highest he is the Fisher King, the vital principle, or Germ. The name, according to mystic teaching, is derived from the fable that this vital principle had Its original abode in the star Alcyone, one of the Pleiades, whence, when the fullness of time had come, It cast a Golden Net through space, and drew to itself a Body.[2]

[1] The Lance = the Male, the Cup = the Female principle; the Blood 'is the Life.' These three belong to each other *ab origine*.

[2] So far I have not been able to discover documentary evidence in support of this interpretation. Cornelius Agrippa certainly refers, Book III. chap. iii., to the Platonists as authority for the view that the vital principle descends from above, clothed first in a garment of air, and then incorporating itself in a grosser material body, but he gives no name to the Germ, or its original dwelling. That Life comes from above is the fundamental principle of all ancient speculations on the subject The fact, however, that a Mystic, not a student of the Grail texts, can, without a moment's hesitation, offer an explanation of the perplexing title, the Fisher King, an explanation, moreover, which belongs exclusively to Life Symbolism, is in itself matter for serious consideration. I have tested the information where possible, and found the Golden Net story well known to Occultists, but no one will give me documentary evidence. I suspect it of being a part of the Oral tradition. Under the circumstances, as a reasonable explanation of the title bas never yet been suggested, I felt I should not be justified in withholding this piece of evidence. Since writing this note I have been informed by Dr. W. A. Nitze that careful researches into

The Fisher King, then, guards the '*Holy*' Grail; the Source of Life, and the Germ of Life, are inseparable.

On the second plane, that of Actuality, the 'Fisher' King, his activities restrained and hampered by the Flesh in which he is now clothed, becomes the 'Maimed' King, he is guardian of the Grail in its normal aspect, that of the Feeding Vessel, the *Rich* Grail; so as a rule it is the Maimed King who presides at the feast in the Grail Castle

(As I pointed out in my Adonis paper, it is the Maimed King on the litter who is the equivalent of the Dead God on the bier. In *Diû Crône* the king is actually dead.)

The Guardian on the third, the Phallic, plane can hardly be other than the mysterious third brother, retained only in the *Perlesvaus*,[1] 'the King of the Chastel Morteil (the

the Ancient Mysteries have led him to assign precisely the same significance to this mysterious character.

[1] Branch I l.—MS. B. N. 1428, Fonds Franç fo. 9vo. 'Li rois des Chastel Morteil a autretant de felonie et de malvaistie en lui comme cil ij. (*i e.* roi Pescheor et roi Pelles) ont de bien en aus qui assez en i ont. Car il calenge le roi Pescheor mon frere et le sien le Saintisme Greal et la lanche dont la pointe saine chasque ior. Mais se Diex plaist il ne l'aura ja.'

In the light of this identification the character of Klingsor, as depicted by Wagner in his *Parsifal*, gains a new significance. It seems as if here, as so often elsewhere, Wagner's dramatic genius had led him to a reconstruction of the *original* form of the legend, and we find again the three Kings, Titurel, the Roi Pescheor (the original Guardian of the Holy Vessel, by which alone he lives); Amfortas, the Roi Mehaigné; and Klingsor, Roi del Chastel Morteil, whose aim is the winning of Spear and Grail—'Und bald, so wahn Ich, hut Ich mir selbst den Gral' The idea of the Three Grail Kings survived into the latest developments of the cycle—B. N. 337 (Fonds Franç) refers more than once to roi Alain, roi Pellinor, roi Pelles, all three sit at the table of the Grail. Sometimes they are brothers, sometimes cousins (cf. pp. 193, 194, 245, 248-250vo). Throughout Perceval is son to Pellinor. Neither Brugger nor Sommer appears to know these passages. (Cf. Brugger, E. M. III. Z. F. P. xxxiii pp. 192-194.)

Body?) in whom was as much of evil as in the other two of good).' He was the guardian of the Lance and Cup in their primitive aspect, but, saving in the 'Bleheris' form, they nowhere retain that aspect; even there the Christianising process is at work on the Lance, it is the Lance of Longinus. It is noteworthy that in the only text in which he survives, the King of the Chastel Morteil is making war on the Fisher King for the possession of these symbols.

Regarded in the light of this demonstration the Grail Quest assumes the significance I had already, though on far less definite grounds, assigned to it; it is the Quest for Life, but more, it is the attempt to reach and grapple with the innermost mystery of life, its ultimate and immortal source. When I said that the Grail was the Vessel in which the nourishment necessary for life was offered to the worshippers I did not go far enough; that was true for the actual ritual plane, but it is more than that, it is very Life itself. Nevertheless, and this we must bear in mind, throughout the romances, name and manifestation are conditioned by the imagery of the Vegetation ritual. It is on the basis of these rites, and the Vessel which formed a part of them, that the teaching has been preserved and formulated

With this clue in our hand we shall see that the 'Bleheris' form is not only the oldest in date, but the only one which corresponds in incident and terminology with the formula, and this it does so precisely that it gives us the key wherewith to unlock the complicated elaborations of its successors.[1]

Gawain beholds the Vessel in its lower stages, as '*Rich*'

[1] The story will be found, Wauchier, vv. 19655 *et seq.* ed. Potvin, A much better version than of the Mons MS. is that of B.N. 12576, fos. 87vo, 91, from which I translated the tale for *Arth. Rom.* vi. A summary is given in my *Adonis* paper.

Grail, or Feeding Vessel, and as Phallic Cup; he fails in the final test which would have enabled him to behold the Mystic Vessel, the '*Holy*' Grail. It is to be noted that the King tells him that though he has not done enough to achieve the real purpose of his journey, yet he has shown such valour in coming thither that he is entitled to receive any information he may desire. This I take to mean that he had passed successfully the lower stages of initiation, those depending on physical courage and endurance.

The journey to the Castle, it will be remembered, is one of great fatigue and difficulty; he rides through a terrible storm, 'so swift and so oft were the lightning flashes that it was a marvel that gentle knight Sir Gawaine died not ere the morning; but this I tell ye that, never was he in so strait a place but he was saved through his great loyalty and his true courtesy, and this very night that we now tell of, did God, Who lieth not, protect him.' He also passes through the adventure of the Chapel of the Black Hand.[1] It is remarkable, too, that Gawain only sees the Lance and the Cup when he is left alone for the second time; had they always been visible he would surely have seen them when alone at first, before the entrance of the ritual procession.

Gawain therefore asks and is told the meaning of the Lance, *i.e.* he reaches the lower stage of enlightenment, and half his task is accomplished.

But now the hardest remains; he must weld his sword,

[1] I am disposed to think that this adventure, also achieved by Perceval (Manessier), is the initiatory test for the lowest stage of enlightenment. This would explain why a Perilous Chapel or Cemetery appears in most of the Grail romances. Contact with the horrors of physical death would form a suitable introduction to an initiation into the mysteries of physical life.

his Will power, and consciousness, to its hilt, the Pentangle, the mystic sign which gives power over the Unseen, so that, *holding his consciousness*,[1] he may pass on to the highest plane, behold the Mystic '*Holy*' Grail, and ask what this wondrous Vessel, which is 'not of wood, nor of any manner of metal, nor in any wise of stone, nor of horn, nor of bone'[2] may be and what purpose it serves? But this he cannot do, he loses consciousness, falls into a trance or slumber and misses the Vision—as he has not seen the '*Holy*' Grail he cannot ask concerning it.

Now when the above interpretation of the Sword test came into my hands I hesitated to accept it, it seemed to me to be of too mystical and abstract a character to be available for critical purposes. Suddenly I remembered two very curious, and in this light very significant, pieces of evidence: (*a*) the sword '*as estranges renges*' in the *Queste* is called in certain texts '*Memoire de Sens*,' '*Gedankennisse van Sinne*,' *i.e. The Sense Memory*; (*b*) in '*Syr Gawayne and the Grene Knighte*' Gawain's badge is the Pentangle. Let us take these pieces of evidence separately.

When I wrote my *Lancelot* studies I noted this curious inscription on the sword,[3] which is found in texts other-

[1] The power of 'holding the consciousness,' *i.e.* retaining the memory of what has been seen on more than one plane is what constitutes the 'Seer.'

[2] B.N. Fonds Franç. 123, translated in *A.R.* vi. The Dutch *Lancelot* runs, 'Ne vas van houte, ne van stene, ne van metale neghene.' Cf. *Legend of Sir Lancelot*, p. 220. It is very remarkable how, with this clue in our hand, phrases otherwise unintelligible become perfectly clear; the Vessel is a mystic, spiritual Vessel, therefore, naturally, wrought of no material substance.

[3] *Op. cit.* p. 180, possibly the Red scabbard belongs to the 'Sans' reading.

wise extremely accurate, and concluded that it was a misreading for 'Memoire de Sans,' the scabbard of the sword being made of the wood of the Tree of Life which had turned red from the blood of Abel. Now I realise that this is the secondary and rationalising meaning, but a meaning based equally upon a Life symbolism, the Tree of Life with its three spindles, white, green, and red, being again Life manifested in three manners; the identification of Green with the Phallic plane, noted above, is here very clearly shown.[1]

This appears also to point to the conclusion that the mysterious sword '*as estranges renges*,' is really the Grail sword in another setting. It will readily be understood that when the Grail became Christianised, either on the limited correspondence of the '*Saint Sang*,' or on the wider correspondence of the Eucharistic Vessel (of which we shall treat presently), the crucial change introduced was that the Invisible became the Visible, and the final test of the Sword lost its significance. Hence it was either dropped out of the story, as by Borron (who well knew what he was writing about); changed to another sword of magical properties, as in *Perlesvaus*, and the '*Bliocadrans*' group; or placed in another setting, as by the author of the *Queste*, who at the same time retained a Sword-test, by transferring, as noted above, the sword of the 'perron' from Arthur to Galahad.

[1] *I.e.*, green here not only replaces black, but is explained on 'phallic' grounds. The colours appear to survive in the veil of the Grail, which is either white or red. In *The Three Days' Tournament*, I drew attention to the constant recurrence of this Triad, or Triads, of colour; white, red, black, or green. In this new light is not, perhaps this change of armour at once a disguise, and an assertion of identity? One, under three recognised manifestations?

One thing, however, seems certain; Gawain must at a later period have fulfilled the conditions, for he bears the invincible sign, the Pentangle,[1] and it is he who, throughout the Grail romances, wins the magic sword, be it that wherewith John the Baptist was beheaded, or of Judas Maccabaeus, or the self-acting sword in *Walewein*, both the two last being, be it noted, the sword '*as estrenges renges*,' which again he wins in the Dutch *Lancelot*.[2]

We are therefore, I think, entitled to claim for Gawain that he is not only the first recorded Grail Seeker, but also

[1] This is how the author of *Syr Gawayne and the Grene Knyghte* describes the sign and its significance. Part II. v. 6—

> Then thay schewed hym the schelde that was of schyr goules
> Wyth the Pentangel depaynt of pure golde hwez.
> . . . . . .
> Hit is a syngne that Salomon set sum-quyle
> In bytoknyng of trawthe, bi tyte that hit habbez;
> For hit is a figure that haldez fyve poyntez,
> And uch lyne umbe-lappez and loukez in other
> And ayquere hit is emdelez, and Englych hit callez
> Overal as I here the endeles knot

Gawain bears it on 'Schelde and cote' as truest of knights.

Then follows an 'interpretation of edification,' setting forth how the sign applied to him; he was faultless in his five senses, possessed the five essential qualities of Knighthood, *i.e.* Fraunchyse, Fellawschype, Cleannesse, Courtesy, and Pity; and how his trust was set on the five wounds of the Saviour. I have before this drawn attention to the radical contradiction between Gawain's character as here set forth and the light in which he is depicted in later romances.

It may be of interest to readers to learn that this mystic sign of the Pentangle has by no means lost its significance. While reading up certain articles on the Grail published in the *Occult Review* for 1907 (which I may as well say proved to be of no critical value whatever), I came upon a statement by a German physician of the curative results he had obtained simply by the use of this sign.

[2] Cf. *Perlesvaus*, Branch vi. 4; *Chastel Merveilleus*, *supra*, vol. i., p. 225; here, though the sword is that of Judas, it was brought to the

the first Grail Winner (as we find in *Diû Crône*), there being independent evidence in favour of his having fulfilled the essential condition.

But here another question arises: What is the connection between the Green Knight and the Grail stories, and how comes it that the decisive proof of Gawain having passed the test, the possession as individual badge of the mystic sign, is found not in the Grail stories, but in the *Green Knight*?

The point is exceedingly interesting; that the Green Knight was probably connected with the group of ideas and practices centering in these vegetation rites had already been brought out by Mr. Cook, in his exhaustive series of studies on *The European Sky God*, published in *Folk Lore*.[1] He identified this mysterious personage, whose name it must be remembered is derived not merely from his dress, but from his colour, hair and beard being green, as is also his steed, with the God of the Wood, *i.e.* the Spirit of Vegetation. This identification had preceded my demonstration of the resemblance between the Grail visit and the same family of belief and practice, and at that moment all we could either of us claim was to have shown the probability that Gawain was, in some manner not to be clearly set forth, connected with this family. Now in view of this important additional evidence it seems probable that the two stories were not merely

land by Joseph of Arimathea. *Walewein*, ed. Jonckbloet, p. 109, ll. 3235 *et seq.*; Dutch *Lancelot*, ll. 38990 *et seq.* I have noted above that in *Perlesvaus* the winning of the sword precedes Gawain's sight of the Grail. This is correct, as the Sword is really the means of vision. It will be noticed that in every case in which it has been retained in the story, it precedes the appearance of the Grail.

[1] *Folk-Lore*, vols. xvi. and xvii. I shall go into this point more fully in the next chapter.

derivatives from a kindred source, but possess a connecting link which made them parts of one original whole.

There is other evidence pointing in the same direction; in the parallel adventures of *Diû Crône* the connection is certain and direct, the knight whose head Gawain cuts off is uncle to the Grail bearer; further, we are told that he changes shapes in a bewildering and terrifying manner, a power ascribed by the *Elucidation* to the Fisher King. Dr. Brugger is certainly right in saying that *Diû Crône* will ultimately be of service in determining the original form of what I have called the *Geste of Syr Gawayne.*[1]

As I suggested above I am now of opinion that the Grail quest was really the central point of the hypothetical '*Geste*,' and that adventures now apparently unconnected with it were originally stages in that quest, tests of the hero's fitness to achieve. The *Green Knight* is undoubtedly a 'Test' story, so probably was the *Loathly Lady*, in the original form,—the Irish version in which she typifies conquest, 'the Sovereignty,' is here very suggestive,—and judging from *Diû Crône*, it looks as if the *Mule sans Frein* had been another.

This then, I take it, is the Grail visit in its earliest recoverable form, we cannot use the word 'earliest' with-

[1] Cf. *Diû Crône*, ll. 13004 *et seq.* This version seems to be a combination of the *Green Knight*, *Mule sans Frein*, and *Chastel Merveilleus* stories. We have the head-cutting episode of the first; Gawain reaches the Castle riding on a mule, and in search of a magic bridle, as in the second; and the enchanter had carried off Arthur's mother as in the third. The castle is also a Turning Castle, a feature found in *Perlesvaus*, where, it will be remembered, Perceval reaches the Grail castle on a white mule. There is much here which requires disentangling. So far as the shape-shifting is concerned, that the principle of Life should be manifested in varying forms is a very obvious piece of imagery.

out qualification, as it is obvious alike that the story here lacks completion, and that it has already been affected by Christian influence (the Lance). Moreover, the ideas lying behind it are of so vital, persistent, and pervasive a character that we cannot ignore the possibility that a story based upon a foundation other than these particular rites, but having for its theme a Search for the Source of Life, might have been previously told.[1]

Now taking this as our first stage, what were the subsequent stages of development, and how were they conditioned? We are justified in assuming, on grounds of historic evidence, that Bleheris (either *Latinarius* or *Fabulator*) did not live beyond the first half of the twelfth century; we will say that he told the story, practically in the form preserved by Wauchier, to his Norman friends and allies sometime before 1147, the last date of reference. Now the story contained a talisman the meaning of which was not clear—a Lance which bled ceaselessly into a Cup, which Lance might or might not have already been identified with the Weapon of the Passion. Let us remember the atmosphere of the time; it was the moment of the Crusades, when the events connected with the foundation of Christianity were being forcibly recalled to the minds of men; when all eyes were turned to Jerusalem, and the effort to wrest the Holy Places, the site of the Death and Burial of the Redeemer, from the hands of the

[1] I know no trace of such a story, unless it be the search for the Earthly Paradise, upon which some scholars have attempted to base the origins of the Grail Quest, but it is quite obvious that such an one might be constructed. Dr. Nitze's researches into the Ancient Mysteries, referred to above, show clearly that the material existed, and that we might have a Quest for the Source of Life, which would be essentially the same as the Grail Quest, but differ in machinery, being based upon another ritual. Cf. also App. to Chap. xi.

infidel captured the imagination of all Christendom. Relics of the Passion, fragments of the Cross, the Nails, the Crown of Thorns, were making their way in a continuous procession to Europe; the Holy Lance had been discovered at Antioch; numerous places boasted the possession of the Holy Blood; is it not obvious that the temptation to Christianise such a story, and that at the most obvious point, the corresponding symbols, would be irresistible? That the change did begin at the lowest stage is certain from the evidence of the version as we now possess it.

My opinion is that the process was carried out by the French hearers, not by the Welsh story-teller. I very much doubt the existence of an original Christian Grail tradition in Wales; it was certainly a land of relics, it was equally a land of relic-keepers, and I should not be surprised to find that certain of the latest forms of the story had been affected by popular Welsh hagiology,[1] but none of these relics really correspond with the Grail symbols. Given the inherent and well-marked character of these latter, I do not think they could have been Christianised from the outside save on the ground of a close external resemblance—the process is the outcome of identification with a *Saint Sang* cult.

Where would the Norman-French retailers of the Grail story have found their 'point d'appui'? Here, with all due respect for Dr. Brugger's opinion I repeat my statement in vol. i., they found what they wanted at Fescamp;

[1] Cf Mr. Machen's articles on the subject, published in *The Academy* in August and September 1907. Naturally I do not accept the views of Grail origins there set forth, they are demonstrably at variance with the literary evidence; but the parallels with the genuine Welsh tradition are very interesting.

that was, from every point of view, their most natural source.

First of all, it was familiar to them; it was in their native land, it was the Abbey favoured and honoured by their princes. The story connected with it boasted an immemorial antiquity, other *Saint Sang* relics were modern in comparison.[1] It was precisely because the Fescamp relic was so old, its origin practically unknown, that it was possible to claim for it a miraculous source. The claims of Glastonbury are, I think, secondary; it was not the centre of a *Saint Sang* cult, and that and not the *Joseph* legend, is the starting point. But the two abbeys, both Benedictine foundations, enjoyed the patronage of

[1] There is a curious passage on the subject in *Gallia Christiana*, vol. xi. p. 204, to which my attention was drawn by Dr Nitze. We there read: 'Docent tamen diu absconditum fuisse, dum vero quo loci depositum esset ignoraretur ab omnibus, repertum esse feliciter xiv. calend. Augusti anno 1171, in muro, seu potius in columna quadam, majoris altaris vicina, quam murus undique circumvestiebat.' In the year 1448 the authenticity of the relic was solemnly declared by a decree of the Faculty of Theology at Paris, in these words: 'Non repugnat pietati fidelium credere quod aliquid de sanguine Christi effuso tempore Passionis remanserit in terris.' Neither of these extracts agrees with the account of the relic given by Leroux de Lincy, in his *Essai sur l'Abbaye de Fescamp*, or with the traditional origin assigned to it. There is there no question as to the hiding-place having been ignored; we are told that Henri de Sully, the fifth Abbot, nephew to our king Stephen, ordered the relics (here the knives, of which in *Gallia Christiana* there is no mention, are referred to), hitherto concealed, to be displayed on the high altar. (Cf. vol. i. p. 161.) The traditional account of the *Saint Sang* relic is that it is part of the dried Blood which Nicodemus removed from the Holy Wounds with a knife. We have certain records of the existence of the relic as early as the commencement of the twelfth century. The evidence seems to point to the antiquity of the relic, and to the lack of any certain tradition as to its 'provenance.'

the same princes, and my opinion is that the story which in its original form (now practically lost) was developed at Fescamp, was later worked over in the interests of Glastonbury, and that this second, or Glastonbury form has been preserved in the *Perlesvaus*.

Thus from the point of view of natural probability Fescamp recommends itself. Again, the stories are practically the same stories; the Blood is preserved by one or other of the actors in the Burial,—which is of minor importance; in both cases the reverence paid to the relic causes the accusation and danger of the relic Keeper; in both instances that relic is mysteriously conveyed to Europe. We are apt to overlook the fact that the manner in which the Grail arrives in this land is variously stated; sometimes Joseph brings it, again we are told (Manessier) that Joseph came first, '*Et li Graaus aprés s'en vint*,' apparently by its own volition. The story of the arrival of the Grail bearers on Joseph's shirt, which, mysteriously inflated, serves as a raft, is on all-fours with the transportation of the fig-tree of Fescamp, and the Crucifix of Lucca. To any one conversant with the science of story transmission it is abundantly evident that we are here dealing with three forms of one and the same legend.[1]

There are other traces of Fescamp influence; in *Perlesvaus* the hero is descended on the father's side from Nicodemus; of the two knives I have already spoken. Here Dr. Brugger can only suggest that in Wolfram's

[1] In Dr. Brugger's view to assert the identity of these legends is 'fast mehr als eine krasse Uebertreibung,' by which I presume he means to imply that it is a deliberately false statement on my part (a terminological inexactitude?). Be that as it may, I adhere to that statement, as this is a point on which I venture to think I am as good a judge as my critic.

source there were two 'tailléors,' which the German poet misunderstood, and converted into knives. But why not the reverse process? There is absolutely no significance in the '*. ii . petis taillèors*,' it is impossible to put a meaning to them. *One* might, in a non-Christian version, represent the Dish, as distinguished from the Cup, form of the Grail, in a Christian version it might be the paten; *two* are from either point of view meaningless. But two knives have, as connected with Fescamp, a real significance and place in a *Saint Sang*-Grail procession. As Dr. Brugger of course knows, *tailléor*, accurately speaking, is not a dish but a platter (cf German *Teller*), on which the food was cut, the root idea is that of cutting; any one conversant with French might, if he wished to disguise the origin of the story, convert the one into the other. In any case the Fescamp legend gives us an adequate explanation of the presence of two knives in Wolfram's text, when no other is forthcoming[1]; and on that ground alone, if no other evidence were forthcoming, the parallel deserves serious consideration.

As to Wauchier's reference to the book written at Fescamp, cannot Dr. Brugger see that the very argument he advances against its genuineness tells in its favour? Had Wauchier been dealing with the Grail, the idea might

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 136, 137. As to the suggestion that the use made of the knives in Wolfram is natural and obvious, I can only say I differ *in toto*. To me the explanation is obviously *post hoc*, it is probably due to Kiot, who found them in his source, and had to account for them in some way which should disguise their connection with Fescamp, his Grail being no longer the *Saint Sang* relic. Kiot was certainly an individual who liked to display his varied and out-of-the-way knowledge, and it is just possible that he might have heard, or read, of a knife being put to an analogous use; but I suspect the story was invented to fit the knives, not vice-versa.

spontaneously have occurred to him, but he is dealing with an adventure which, on the surface, has nothing whatever to do with Fescamp. What could have brought the abbey to his mind at this point if there had not been some genuine connecting link? I have remarked before that this is the only moment in the *Perceval*, in which the hero is brought into connection with Merlin, and the pseudo-historic Arthurian tradition; and this appears now to be precisely the characteristic of the earlier *Perceval-Grail* form.[1]

The really decisive test appears to me to be: is the evidence in the romances, as we possess them, in favour of the view that the Christianising process did start from the lowest stage, from that stage which, in its externals presented so close a parallel to the actual objects of the Passion and to which Fescamp offered, in the minds of the Norman French, a familiar, if partial, correspondence?

I think there is abundant evidence; first, this, and this alone, explains the prominent position assigned to the Lance. In its original significance it is the dominant of the two Life symbols; taken into the story it was the first to be Christianised; it always precedes the Grail; it is that and not the sight of the Vessel which creates the greater sensation. (On the plane of actuality, where the Grail is the Feeding Vessel, the Lance is the instrument of the death, or wounding, of the god as in the *Parzival*.)

Again, the Eucharistic interpretation once adopted, it is obvious that there was no further place for the '*Saint Sang*' Vessel of Joseph of Arimathea, for here the imagery

[1] The passage is not on all-fours with assertions that records of adventures which never happened were preserved as historic documents in places designed for the care of such. Wauchier simply says the adventure was in a tale 'conte' written at Fescamp.

holds good on all three planes. The Eucharist is actually and equally the Body and Blood of the Incarnate God; sustenance for the Natural Life, *i.e* Bread and Wine; and the true Spiritual Source of Eternal Life. The very fact of the persistence of the '*Joseph*' story shows that the identification had as its starting point a Vessel the 'contenu' of which was actual Blood.[1]

And now we understand the confusion in Borron's presentment; to him belongs the credit of grasping the possibilities involved in the adaptation to the original story of Eucharistic Symbolism. Hence his three Tables, his three Grail keepers, his ignoring of the Lance, his insistence on the Latin books, '*par les grans clers faites et dites*,' the secret words, which I take to be 'There be Three which bear witness—*And these Three are One.*' His whole scheme becomes simple and definite. But he lacked either the leisure or the patience to carry it out fully; or perhaps it would be more accurate to say: in his view the two points of cardinal importance were, (*a*) to determine the character of the Grail, which he did in *Joseph*, (*b*) to connect it closely with Arthurian pseudo-historic tradition, which he did in *Merlin* and the *Mort Arthus*. The 'Quest' was in his view of secondary importance, and instead of composing a new one in harmony with his idea, or adequately rewriting an old one, he took over for that section of his cycle, practically without alteration, a previous form in which the Grail appeared in its first Christian form as the Vessel of the lowest stage, identified with a *Saint Sang* tradition. Here is the Lance which has

[1] Cf. vol. i. p. 333. I have before remarked on the change from '*contenu*' to '*container*,' now explicable on the hypothesis that it was this latter which represented the actual instrument of teaching, the Vessel of the ritual feast.

no place in Borron's own scheme; here, when Brons brings Perceval to the presence of the Grail, he says not 'Behold the Vessel of the Passion,' but 'Behold the Blood.' He prays, '*Si voiremens com ţou est Vostre benéois Sans.*'[1] It is the 'contenu,' not the 'container,' which is the object of reverence.

Again in the *Perlesvaus*, which I hold to retain some of the most primitive features, the symbols are in the same form as in Bleheris, the Lance bleeds into the Grail.[2] I do not see how we can avoid the conclusion that the Christianising process started at the obvious and nearest point of contact and worked upwards to the full Spiritual and Mystical development of Borron and the *Queste*. The group represented by Chrétien and Wolfram shows the Grail in this earlier form (*i.e.* as one of twin symbols); their proto-type, therefore, probably ante-dated Borron.

Now, too, we understand other features of the story, such as the extraordinary length of days attributed to Brons. If the Fisher King be the vital principle, he, of course, never really dies, any more than the Vegetation god was held to die; it is '*Le roi est mort, Vive le roi!*' he yields to his successor and so doing renews his youth, he is '*revenu en sa juvence.*' This is my reason for holding the old man in the inner chamber, in Chrétien and Wolfram, to be the genuine Fisher King, the vital principle drawing nourishment from the ultimate source of Life—he lives by the Grail.

Again we understand why Borron dropped the sword; the Grail was no longer manifested under more than one aspect, and normal conditions sufficed for the vision.

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 83.

[2] *Perlesvaus*, Branch VI 19

But still the quester required to be instructed in the true character of the symbol. In the form preserved by Chrétien and Wolfram, where Fisher King and Grail are so closely connected, the question would naturally be, *Whom does this vessel serve?* and the answer as naturally convey instruction as to the Source of Life. Possibly in the original Mystical interpretation the question would be: *What?* What is it? To what use is it put?[1] In any case I think we have the question practically in its original form. It is no 'harmlose Erfindung' but an integral part of the story.

The Invisible object of the Quest once rendered Visible, a resultant confusion ensued, affecting alike the instrument of Vision, the Sword, and the desire for enlightenment, the Question; both were thereby rendered unintelligible. The author of the *Queste* who, equally with Borron, understood his subject-matter, grappled boldly with this difficulty Under the conditions in which the story came into his hands, where the Life Symbolism was expressed in Eucharistic terms, there was but one method in which the original super-sensible character of the '*Holy*' Grail could be retained, and that was, to make the elect hero witness of the actual process of Transubstantiation. This I hold to be the real interpretation of Galahad's final Vision; he beholds with mortal eye the stupendous and ineffable Mystery of the conversion of material elements into

[1] As we saw above, it was wrought of no material substance, and though the Dish and Cup, on the lower planes, symbolised it, we cannot say what was its actual form. In *Perlesvaus* we are told how the Grail changes five times, and the last change was into a chalice (cup), Branch xxii. 3 I heard a precisely similar vision described by one who had never read the romance: there were three changes, and the last *was not a Grail.*

Spiritual Food—and forthwith departs this life. The *Queste* is the natural and inevitable development of the lines laid down by Borron in his *Perceval* cycle, and though Galahad, as the vicarious representative of Lancelot in the Grail quest, would probably have made his appearance in any case, the form in which he did so is, I submit, conditioned by, and dependent upon, the previous existence of the Borron cycle.

Now, too, we understand why Galahad was the last word; from the point of view of the History there were Three Earthly Grail Keepers (even as there were Three Mystic Guardians), Joseph, Brons, Perceval; from that of the Quest there are Three Grail Winners, Gawain, Perceval, Galahad. Under Borron's scheme the two are united in Perceval, who is at once hereditary Keeper and winner of the Quest. For those who understood the original significance of the story its development could go no further, the mystic number had been fulfilled, hence, in the *Queste*, the Grail vanishes from earth. It seems possible that the Kiot-Wolfram version may represent an attempt to fulfil the process under hereditary conditions, and that Lohengrin, rather than Galahad, was to be the third winner. The Quest being distinct from the History, the Grail Winner, and the Grail Keeper are not, as might otherwise be expected, identical.[1]

Another point which requires to be brought out is the practically unaltered character of the actual Grail, the Feeding Vessel. To the Initiates of either degree, the

[1] In my view the Quest form started as an 'adventure' pure and simple. Bleheris knew what the incidents connoted, but had no desire to dwell upon their inner and mystic significance. The 'History' versions are of course written entirely from the edifying point of view; hence the confusion.

objective, exoteric, rites naturally yielded in importance to the esoteric teaching which they veiled. It was on the true significance of that teaching, rather than on the forms in which it was disguised, that the stress was laid, and these actual outward forms varied less than the symbols of the inner significance, which changed with the modification of that hidden meaning. The Vessel of the actual ritual feast preserved its character even in the most mystic surroundings. The '*Rich*' Grail of Bleheris feeds the dwellers in Monsalvasch, in Corbenic, in Arthur's court, even as, apart from human agency, it fed the guests in Gawain's mysterious castle. The 'Curse of Logres' and the 'Wasted Land' persist even in such Christianised versions as the 'Huth' *Merlin* and Gerbert; in fact I do not see how any dispassionate student of the Grail literature can avoid the recognition of a persistent three-fold character; a *Saint Sang* relic, a vessel providing material food, and a mysterious transmitter of Spiritual Force; can this three-fold character be explained on any other basis than that laid down above?

An attempt at co-ordinating our versions can, from the imperfect character of the material, be only provisional and tentative. On broad lines the process appears to have been as follows.

In the first half of the twelfth century, certainly before 1147, Bleheris related the story of the Grail to his Norman allies. The Vessel was then non-Christian, the story one of initiation into the triple mysteries of a Life-Cult. If Wauchier's version represents the story exactly as it was told, the process of Christianisation had already affected the Lance.

During the next thirty years the following changes, which at present it would be rash to date, took place:—

a. The story was definitely Christianised on the model of a *Saint Sang* legend, which, judging alike from the parallelism of incident, and the nationality of the agents, Norman-French, was probably the Fescamp form. Gawain was at first retained as hero, but was later replaced by Perceval[1] who seems at this stage to have adopted the adventures of his predecessor, and taken over the *Gawain* form much as it stood. As evidence on this point we have the *Chastel Merveilleus*, and *Diu Crône* Grail sections, and the *Elucidation* which attributes the Bleheris form to Perceval equally with Gawain.

b. The construction of a definite *Grail-Perceval* romance, based upon the same foundation, *i.e.* the Fescamp legend, in which the original *Perceval* story was subordinated to the Grail quest. Of this romance traces are found in Borron's Quest section, in the *Perlesvaus*, and in Wauchier's continuation.

c. Somewhere in the latter portion of the twelfth century, possibly in the decade 1165-1175, a poem was constructed combining the Grail portion of the previous romance with the genuine *Perceval*, non-Grail, tradition. The existence of this poem is witnessed to by the Bliocadrans fragment (very probably a part of the original poem), Chrétien, Wolfram, and part of Gerbert's continuation. There does not seem to have been any attempt at a prose rendering of this group, which may be termed the *Perceval-Grail* group, and which was in no way connected with the pseudo-historic Arthurian tradition, *i.e.* with the Arthurian story as popularised by Geoffrey. In this group the Grail is the Christianisation of the Life-symbols on the lowest plane; it is represented as a Vessel preceded by a Bleeding Lance,

[1] The succession, and '*raison d'être*,' of the Grail Winners demands a separate study, and will be treated later.

and is actually a *Saint Sang*, and not a Sacramental, symbol.

d. In the last decade of the century Robert de Borron boldly undertook to rewrite the story, with the double (more correctly the successive) objects of conforming the symbolism to that of Eucharistic doctrine, and of incorporating the whole in a pseudo-historic account of Arthur's reign. For this purpose he utilised a poem belonging to the early *Grail-Perceval* group, which, however, he did not completely remodel, thus leaving a discrepancy between his account of the Grail, which in the early section is distinctly Eucharistic, in the Quest portion retains its original form, that of a *Saint Sang* Vessel. For the *Mort Artus* section, in especial, and for the 'Arthur' material generally, Borron used a metrical French chronicle, differing from any now known, but showing marked affinity with both Wace and Layamon. (This will be discussed later.) The two main objects of Borron's work being as noted above, those sections of the cycle, which dealt (*a*) with the exact nature and origin of the symbol (*Joseph*), (*b*) with the conquests and death of Arthur (*Mort Artus*), were to him of primary importance. Hence the length of the latter section, and the comparative lack of importance assigned to the Quest. To his literary sources we must add the personal equation of Borron's individual familiarity with the material he was handling. No man could possibly have cast his story in a form showing in the earlier section, *Joseph* and *Merlin*, such harmonious correspondence with its inner significance, if he had not been thoroughly familiar with that significance. That Borron was an 'Initiate,' and was treating his subject from the *in*side, and not from the *out*side, there can be no reasonable ground for doubting. On this point we have a very curious piece of evidence; the story which he relates

of the sons of Brons, of Alain's refusal to marry, and subsequent appearance, without any explanation, as father of the Grail winner, is paralleled in the Hindu Cosmogony. The sons of Brahma are bidden to wed and become the progenitors of the Human race. One of them, Narada, refuses, and even reproaches Brahma with being a false teacher for commanding him to marry, yet he is afterwards reckoned as one of the great Progenitors, and of all the Indian Sages the one whose teaching is of most importance! Writers on the subject tell us that the contradiction between these two positions is never explained, and is still a problem to Occultists.[1] Now here we have, precisely in teaching concerning the origins of Life, the same story which Borron tells of the sons of one whom he identifies with the vital principle, the Fisher King! The coincidence can hardly be accidental. In any case, whence did Borron derive the story, which, so far as I know, is not told elsewhere? I think we shall have to admit that the mysterious writings, which enshrined the true Grail teaching were not, on Borron's lips, a mere figure of speech!

Whatever his sources, the boldness of Borron's innovation was amply justified; the story in its new Eucharistic-Historic form, was seized upon, and rendered into prose as a medium more befitting a serious contribution to History, it was an '*Estoire*,' and no longer a '*conte*.'[2]

Thus to Borron's initiative we owe not only the *Queste*, but the general cyclic form of later Arthurian Romance.

[1] The story is told in the '*Nárada, Pancha Rátra*.'—(*Biblioteca Indica*, vol. 38.) No translation of the text is given, but Dr. Routh, to whom I referred the question, has assured me the version given above is correct. In this poem Brahma, as Creator, is delegating a portion of his activities to his sons.

[2] Cf. here Dr. Brugger's remarks, *L'Enserrement Merlin*, i. p. 75.

The respect shown for his name, and the anxiety to claim, for subsequent developments, the seal of his authority, are, I think, amply justified.

After the appearance of Borron's cycle, and its rendering into prose, in the early years of the thirteenth century, the *Perlesvaus* took its present form. The evolution of this romance is not perfectly clear so far; I am inclined to think that, as we have it, it represents at least a third redaction.[1] Certainly it retains very primitive features; it is the only one of our versions which connects the story directly with Nicodemus; the only one which gives the Christian Grail symbols in their earliest form, the Lance Bleeding into the Cup; the only one which preserves the Third Guardian, whose disappearance naturally followed on the Christianisation of his special symbols; the very fact that he has so completely disappeared is evidence of the point at which the change began. At the same time the strongly Sacramental character of the imagery points to a stage posterior to Borron, while the introduction of the slaying of the Red Knight must be posterior to the construction of the 'Bliocadrans' *Perceval-Grail* group, the Red knight is part of the *Perceval*, not of the Grail, tradition.

In its present form the story is closely connected with Glastonbury. Probably the Fescamp *Grail-Perceval* poem was taken over to Glastonbury and remodelled in the interests of that foundation, Joseph, of course, replacing Nicodemus. This second form, possibly still metrical, would ante-date Borron, and may well be that used by Gerbert in the second section of his *Perceval* continuation.

[1] Dr. Nitze is at present engaged on an exhaustive study of the text and its sources, which will doubtless throw much light upon the question.

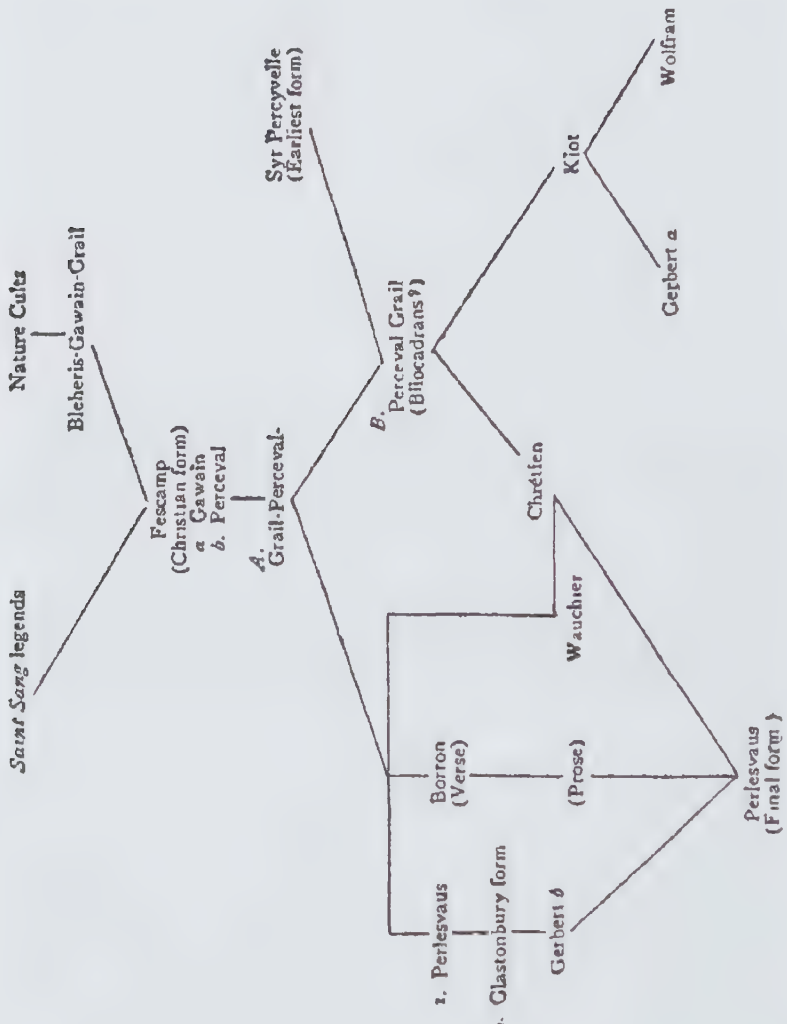
Finally, at the commencement of the thirteenth century the whole was done into prose, remodelled on the lines of Christian Mysticism introduced by Borron, and connected with the *Lancelot*[1] as part of the Arthurian cyclic redaction.

The final stage was the supersession of the prose *Perceval*, and the prose *Perlesvaus* by the Galahad *Queste*, the last word in the identification of the Life Cults with high Christian Symbolism.

In the lack of complete evidence as to the primary stages a complete tabulated scheme is not easy; it would probably work out somewhat in the following manner[2]:—

[1] I see no internal proof of connection with any other romance save the *Lancelot*, but I would think it possible that this connection may have come about previously to the construction of Borron's cycle. That the *Perlesvaus* exercised a powerful influence over the final development of the Arthurian cycle, I am convinced; this, however, is a point which belongs rather to the *Mort Artus* section, and will be discussed later.

[2] I have not included the '*Queste*' or '*Grand Saint-Graal*,' as their development is so closely connected with that of the *Lancelot*, that it would require a special table of affiliation. Naturally they belong to the *A. Grail-Perceval* branch.


Nature Cults
Bleheris-Gawain-Grail
Saint Sang legends
Fescamp
(Christian form)
a. Gawain
b. Perceval
A.
Grail-Perceval-
Syr Percyvelle
(Earliest form)
B.
Perceval Grail
(Blocadrans?)
Kiot
Wolfram
Gerbert a
Chrétien
Wauchier
1. Perlesvaus
2. Glastonbury form
Gerbert b
Borron
(Verse)
(Prose)
Perlesvaus
(Final form)

It will be seen that in the above Table I have omitted both Manessier and *Peredur*. With regard to the first, I have not as yet given to the texts the careful and minute study necessary to determine their relation to each other, and to the *Queste* The version certainly, in part, belongs to the *Grail-Perceval* form, and depends upon Borron.

With regard to *Peredur* the position is different: neither this nor *Syr Percyvelle* can be considered as Grail texts; but the influence of the latter, or its prototype, upon the '*Bliocadrans*' group of *Perceval-Grail* poems cannot, I think, be denied. We find here a sequence of incidents which are repeated in a more elaborate form, in all the representatives of that group. The *Enfances*; the connection with Lufamur, or Blancheflor; the existence of a feud with hereditary foes; whether the Red Knight, or a monstrous Hag or Hags; incidents of which the Borron group have, in the first instance alone, retained a trace, and that an imperfect one In the examination as to the primitive form of the *Perceval* legend, included in vol. i.,[1] we found that the English and German poems retained the larger number of original features. The inclusion of the *Syr Percyvelle*, though not a Grail poem, in our Table is therefore imperative.

This is not so with the Welsh form; the 'talisman' section, in so far as it represents the Grail, derives from a non-primitive form, and has been radically re-modelled. I should call this section pseudo-Grail, rather than Grail. Some of the *Perceval* incidents are genuine in character, with regard to others I am very doubtful. I am inclined to suspect that we are dealing with an amalgamation of two heroes: the anonymous 'Son of the Widow,' whom we know as Perceval, and the genuine Welsh hero, Peredur

[1] Vol. i. chapter iii.

ap Evrawc, who must have had a story of his own.[1] I think it possible that much of the confusion of the *Peredur* arises from the identification of two distinct personalities; probably there were features in the traditional Peredur which afforded parallels with the other tale. As the story now stands I see very little genuine element in it; it is not a Grail romance, I doubt if it be really a *Perceval* romance, and in this doubt as to its exact character I have preferred not to include it in the Table.

This, then, is my view of the intricate problem of the Grail romances. It started from the standpoint of instruction in the Nature, and Sources, of Life, in all its manifestations, the outward and popular form of such instruction being embodied in the rites familiar to scholars as connected with Vegetation. This teaching, which had been discouraged and displaced by Christianity boldly identified itself with its victorious rival, on the outward basis of the reverence paid to the *Saint Sang*.[2] So far as our examination goes the identification appears to have taken place under the joint auspices of Welsh story-teller, and Norman-French knights, somewhere about the middle of the twelfth century. This identification coincided with the interest in relics awakened by the Crusades. The success of the venture was immediate; the Quest for Life, the yearning to know the sources of our Being, whence we come, and whither we go, had been from time immemorial the object

[1] So far as I am aware no real attempt to ascertain the extent and character of the *Peredur*, as distinguished from the *Perceval*, tradition has as yet been made. Such a study appears to me to be an essential condition of a critical examination of this Mabinogi. I am very doubtful as to the Welsh having ever looked upon *Peredur* as a 'Grail' hero. On this point cf. next chapter.

[2] The basis of the ultimate, and inner, transformation will be explained in the next chapter.

of Man's profoundest study, and most strenuous endeavour. Owing to certain features practically inherent in the subject matter Christianity had discouraged such studies, whether they appeared in the guise of Pagan, or semi-Pagan rites, or Gnostic metaphysics. Now, at last, these ideas clothed themselves in purely Christian and orthodox terminology, and in such guise received an enthusiastic welcome.[1]

But, be it noted, the Church never officially recognised either the literature, or its quasi-legendary basis; the Church, true to tradition, knew well what the Grail really was, and whether it were held to be simply a Symbolic representation of the Quest for the Source of Life, or the survival of the Gnosis, tacitly discouraged it.[2]

[1] The persistence of this abstract teaching can be amply demonstrated by reference to any work on Occultism, Gnosticism, or Esoteric Christianity. Its relation to the latter will be explained later. That in its pre-Christian form it should have existed without a concrete, and popular, counterpart, seems improbable. It seems to me that in these Vegetation rites, the antiquity and general diffusion of which are as fully proved as is the persistence of an Esoteric tradition, we have precisely the counterpart required. It is essential to the vital persistence of any religion that it take into consideration 'the man in the street'; the Folk must have their share as well as the Intellectuals, else it only survives as a curious relic of the past, demanding classification. But Life-Cults do *not* die out. To my mind the correspondence which we here find between Vegetation rites and abstract doctrine is explained by the fact the former is, and always has been, the popular expression of the latter.

[2] I am of opinion that this last idea, imperfectly understood, is at the root of much of the confused writing on the Grail tradition which we find outside the circle of critical scholarship. The abstract notion is really there, but it needed to be welded to certain definite concrete forms before it could become the source of romantic inspiration. The very title of the symbol should be sufficient; a body of abstract teaching is not called '*The Dish*' without cause! The teaching has a pre-Christian and a Christian basis; it is the former which has furnished the imagery and terminology of the legend.

Individual writers, such as Borron and the authors of *Perlesvaus* and the *Queste* might, indeed, go as far as they could on the road of Christian Mysticism, the more edifying they could make the story, the better; but the Grail literature was, on the whole, not regarded with Ecclesiastical favour. A slight, but unmistakable atmosphere of Unorthodoxy hung about it, and could never be shaken off. I strongly suspect that it was this defect, inherent in the subject matter, which caused, within the limits of a century from its first appearance, the practical cessation of this literature. If we knew the truth we should probably find that the writing of Grail romances was quietly but steadily discouraged by the Ecclesiastical authorities. And yet, at the same time, the nature of the material was such that its total disappearance was practically impossible. So long as Humanity exists, so long will it consider Life as the supreme boon, 'more Life, and fuller' is the natural desire of Man. So long as that desire endures, so long will its expression be welcomed, and when that expression is enshrined in such monuments of literature as certain of the Grail romances, in the high Mysticism of Borron, the *Perlesvaus*, and the *Queste*; in the graceful verse of Chrétien de Troyes; in the true and tender humanity of Wolfram von Eschenbach; in Malory's noble and dignified prose, so long will the Quest for Life, as expressed in the terms of the Grail Quest, retain a hold upon the imagination, and affection, of the reader [1]

[1] In order to avoid misapprehension it may be well here to state to what extent I am indebted to another for the theory above set forth. I am the more bound to do so as my informant would certainly strongly repudiate any responsibility for many of my conclusions! From the very extensive notes sent to me as the result of the publication of my *Adonis* paper I took the following: the Three Worlds (the

basis of the interpretation); the explanation of the Sword (a point of almost equal importance); and the meaning of the title 'Fisher King.' To these, when we discuss the question of the Grail winners, I shall add another suggestion, of no less importance. For the use made of these suggestions I alone am responsible, my informant, who is an advocate of the 'abstract' theory, dissenting very strongly from the stress I have laid upon the Nature Cults. A Mystic, and not a student of the Grail texts, the wide applicability of the hints he had given took him by surprise; the undesigned result, that of affording a complete and coherent theory of the whole course of Grail romantic evolution, is therefore the more striking and convincing.

CHAPTER XI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAIL TRADITION CONTINUED

In the foregoing chapter, I attempted to trace, as completely as the material at my disposal would permit, the origin and gradual development of the wonderful legend of the Holy Grail. There were, however, certain points in my argument which required fuller treatment than the exigencies of the moment, the setting forth as clearly and concisely as possible the process of literary development, allowed me to give. Here, in view of certain criticisms, which are inevitably bound to suggest themselves to my readers, I would examine a little more closely the grounds on which I base the solution proposed above, and fill up certain inevitable *lacunæ* in the argument.

It will be asked very naturally: granted that such a story was told at the period suggested, *i.e.* late in the eleventh, or early in the twelfth century, granted that the meaning given is, in the face of the evidence we possess as to the widespread popularity of such cults, quite possible, even probable, does Wales possess the atmosphere favourable to the inception and development of such a tale? do the beliefs and practices of the Insular Celts provide us with the requisite environment?

I would answer unhesitatingly that I believe they do. We know, to begin with, that the Celtic peoples of the

British Isles had a common property in the Celtic Pantheon; that the mysterious beings known in Ireland as the Tuatha de Danann were also the divinities of Wales, and that, in the latter country, tales of which they were the heroes formed a part of the equipment of the professional story-teller

Now the character of these beings has been most carefully and thoroughly investigated by Mr. Alfred Nutt, in volume ii. of *The Voyage of Bran*,[1] and their true nature as Deities of growth and fertility, and their connection with vegetation and agricultural ritual, most amply demonstrated. 'As stated in the *Book of Armagh* by a writer of the tenth century, they are *Dei Terreni*.'[2]

But they were much more than this, and here I think the interpretation I ventured to suggest of the true character of vegetation ritual receives quite unexpected support; they were also lords and masters of the essence of Life. The Irish Annals tell us that before they came to Ireland they inhabited what is now Greece, and when the Athenians were assailed by the Syrians, aided them most effectively, 'for they used to send demons into the bodies of the slain Athenians, quickening them by means of their heathen lore.' Mr Nutt comments on this passage: 'Thus the first glance we obtain of them is in that capacity of masters over the essence and manifestation of Life which they retain throughout Irish legend.'[3]

The object of the study which I am quoting is the demonstration of the existence among the Celts of a

[1] *The Voyage of Bran*, Kuno Meyer and Alfred Nutt (Grimm Library, vols. iv. and vi.).

[2] Cf. *op. cit.* chapter xvii. where the general evidence on this point is collected and summarised.

[3] *Op. cit.* p. 171.

special form of the doctrine of re-incarnation, to which Mr. Nutt gives the title of *The Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth*, according to which a god, or demi-god, may be born again in the person of some famous hero; thus Mongan (the typical case upon which the study is based) is a re-birth of Finn.

Mr. Nutt notes the fact that this particular faculty of re-birth is almost invariably associated with the Tuatha de Danann: 'Lug re-born as Cuchulinn, Etain re-born as Etain, are members of the god clan. Mongan, re-birth of Finn by one account, is by another the son of Mannanan (the Irish equivalent of the Welsh Manawyddan); lastly (and this is of importance to us, as giving us our link with Wales), the famous bard Taliessin, re-birth of a Welsh counterpart of Finn, is son of a Welsh goddess akin to the Tuatha de Danann.[1]' (I would note here that the poems recounting the successive incarnations of Taliessin approach much more closely to the generally accepted teaching on this point than do the Irish re-birth parallels.)[2] In the process of his study Mr. Nutt cites a series of statements from early classical writers as to the character of the Druidic teaching; all assert that it taught the immortality of the soul, and re-incarnation, while Strabo adds significantly that popular belief urged liberality towards the Druids as a means of ensuring abundant harvests; *i.e.* we find the categoric connection of the two ideas, Nature Worship, and the sources of spiritual Life[3]

The above evidence seems to me sufficient to prove that the beliefs and practices of the Insular Celts were of such a character as to render not only possible, but probable, the existence, and persistence, among them of such

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 93.
[2] Cf. *Taliesin*, Mabinogion, ed. Nutt.
[3] *Op cit.* pp. 107, *et seq.*

a cult as I have postulated in the previous chapter. If we take into consideration the topographical character of Wales, its mountains, glens, and rocky fastnesses, we must recognise that that land afforded an admirable shelter for the last activities of an expiring and discredited faith.

Let us further remember that the eleventh and twelfth centuries were periods of great literary activity, witnessing the transcription and collection in annalistic form of the fragmentary records of traditional history and heroic legend, both Irish and Welsh; and that in the latter country such legends formed a part of the stock-in-trade of the bards,[1] and I think that no unprejudiced student can refuse to admit that (*a*) it would have been possible for such a story as the Bleheris-Grail story to be told in Wales, (*b*) for it to be recorded with an intelligent appreciation of its real significance. But, it may be replied, admit that it were so, that the story were of a genuine Celtic and non-Christian origin, how account for the persistence of the features on which, as non-, or rather pre-Christian you lay such stress? The titles of the threefold Guardian, the Wasted Land, the Mystic Sword test, how account for their persistence after the story had become connected with definitely Christian, and specifically Eucharistic, symbolism? Would not the French retailers of the story, to whom in your theory the process of translation from one set of terms to the other is mainly due, have been at pains to divest that story of all trace of its real origin?

Such objections I hold to be entirely reasonable, but

[1] Cf. the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, in which figure the Welsh equivalents of the Tuatha de Danann, while in the *Taliesin* poems, as noted above, we have a peculiar, and cryptic, teaching as to the source and transmission of life.

they are susceptible of answer from more than one point of view. First, we must not over-estimate the intelligence of the Continental transcribers; the Norman-French did not inherit the same traditions as the Celts, and undoubtedly many retailed the story without a comprehension of its true meaning. And, on the other hand, as I have said before, we cannot over-estimate the conservative tendencies of the professional story-teller; a feature which struck the public as effective would inevitably be retained.

But there is another class of writers and retailers to take into consideration, men like Borron, and the author of the *Queste*, who wrote with full knowledge and intention; what was their stand-point? Upon what ground did they undertake the radical transformation of so, apparently, essentially Pagan a tale? Here we touch upon a question of vital and absorbing interest.

We, to-day, are far too prone to ignore the fact that in its earliest stages, Christianity, like all the great religions of the world, possessed an Esoteric, as well as an Exoteric teaching, and held it by no means necessary to conceal the fact. So far from emphasising, and insisting upon, the difference existing between this and earlier systems of belief, the apologists of the Early Church, while positive that they held the Truth in its fulness, were in no way concerned to deny a share in that Truth to others; rather, they emphatically asserted that the *contenu* of Christianity was shared by the higher and more spiritual masters of other Faiths. Christianity, too, had its Mysteries, and those Mysteries were in aim and practice analogous to the greater Mysteries of India and Egypt.[1]

[1] The Early Fathers refer expressly to India, as well as to Egypt. I would lay stress on this, as we have, in the previous chapter, a curious parallel with the Indian 'life' tradition, *i.e.* the 'Alain' story.

On this subject the writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers are of extraordinary interest. Clement of Alexandria, in his *Stromata*,[1] tells us how, after his acceptance of Christianity, he sought out special teachers: 'When I came upon the last, he was the first in power, having tracked him out concealed in Egypt, I found peace.' 'The Mysteries (he is speaking of Christian teaching) are delivered mystically, that what is spoken may be in the mouth of the speaker, rather not in his voice, but in his understanding.' His teaching, he says, will be 'an image to recall the archetype to him who was struck with the Thyrsus.' (This is a direct reference to the Initiate of the Mysteries, and, as we shall see presently, the remark is of considerable interest.) Again, he states, 'We are then those who are believers in what is not believed, and who are gnostics as to what is unknown; that is, gnostics as to what is unknown and disbelieved by all, but believed and known by a few.'[2] A chapter in the same book is headed: 'On how Divine things are wrapped up in figures both in the Secret and in Heathen writings.'[3] Here Secret = Christian. Origen, in his Apology against Celsus,[4] is even more explict. He says, 'to speak of the Christian Doctrine as a *secret* system is altogether absurd, but that there should be certain doctrines not made known to the multitude, which are revealed after the Exoteric ones have been taught, is not a peculiarity of Christianity alone, but

[1] Cf. Stromata (*Miscellanies*), Book I. chap. i.

[2] *Ibid.* Book V. chap. i.

[3] *Ibid.* chap. xii. These quotations are all made from Donaldson's *Ante-Nicene Library*, which may be found in the Reading Room of the British Museum, thus easily accessible for reference. The 'Stromata' will be found in vols. IV. and XII. of the series.

[4] *Ante-Nicene Library*, vol. X. The quotations are all from Book VII.

also of philosophic systems, in which certain truths are exoteric, and others esoteric. Some of the disciples of Pythagoras were content with his *ipse dixit*, while others were taught in secret those doctrines which were not deemed fit to be communicated to profane, and insufficiently prepared ears. Moreover, all the Mysteries that are celebrated everywhere throughout Greece and barbarous countries, although held in secret, have no discredit thrown upon them, so that it is in vain he endeavours to calumniate the secret doctrines of Christianity, seeing that he does not correctly understand its nature.' In a still more curious passage, Origen definitely claims magical properties as attached to the very words of the Faith. 'So-called magic is not, as the followers of Epicurus and Aristotle suppose, an altogether uncertain thing, but is, as those skilled in it prove, a consistent system, having words which are known to exceedingly few; we say that the names "Sabaoth" and "Adonai," and the other names treated with so much reverence among the Hebrews, are not applicable to any ordinary created things, but belong to a secret theology, which refers to the Framer of all things. A similar philosophy of Names applies also to Our Jesus, Whose Name has already been seen, in an unmistakable manner, to have expelled myriads of evil spirits from the souls and bodies of men.' He goes on to remark that the same formula, translated into another tongue, may lose its force, as much of the virtue lies in the sound.[1]

Now it is true that Origen ended his days as a heretic,

[1] The theory is of course that which we now term Sound Waves, and is not entirely unscientific! The whole passage is most curious in its implications. Where so much has been lost it is interesting to note the survival of this teaching in the office for Exorcism, still in use in the Catholic Church.

but in this *Apologia* he is the official exponent of the Orthodox Faith, opposing the arguments advanced by the heretic Celsus.

With these writings before us, it should afford no matter for surprise to learn that there are extant fragments of *Mysteries* as practised in the Early Church, and that the early teaching as to the possibility of union with the Divine bears to the modern reader a most daring character.[1]

To put the whole case shortly, the Fathers of the Early Church in no way believed that during the centuries intervening between the Creation and the foundation of Christianity, Mankind had been divorced from the Divine Source of true Spiritual Life; rather, they held that everywhere, and in all ages, elect souls, willing to tread the rough and difficult path of Initiation and purification, had been able to come into intimate and vivifying touch with God. What Christianity had done was, by the Incarnation, and Extension of the Incarnation in the Sacraments or Outer Mysteries, to make that possible for all, which before had been possible for but a few. But they held also that there was a still closer and more intimate union to be achieved, and that for this the old methods still held

[1] In *Esoteric Christianity* (Besant) the following account of these *Mysteries* is given:—The culminating point of these Mysteries was the *Mystery of the Resurrection*, when the Initiate, touched on the heart by the Thyrsus (cf. Clement's words quoted above), fell into a trance, a Spirit (the real man) departing on a three days' journey through the unseen world, where He received final illumination from 'the Great Ones,' the Body remaining during that time rigid, and apparently dead. On the third day the Body was placed where the rays of the rising sun would strike upon it, and at the first contact with the vivifying beams, the Initiate, purified and illuminated, re-entered his mortal habitation.

good. Every student of the non-Christian Mysteries knows that the ultimate object of these rites was to attain to union with the Deity in whose honour they were performed; the Fathers of the Early Church claimed for their Mysteries precisely the same object, and the same efficacy.[1]

With this evidence before us it is easy to understand that in early Christian times, at least, the higher aspect of the Nature cults, the quest for the Source of Spiritual life, the 'Holy' Grail, would have made a very distinct appeal to the Christian Initiate; he would have recognised that rites, outwardly differing, might in their essential object be identical, and would have had no hesitation in translating the machinery of the non-Christian Mystery into Christian terms.

But doctrines so broad in their scope, and so universal in their application, were not long regarded with official favour and they soon disappeared from the Orthodox teaching of the Western church; the writings of the post-Nicene Fathers are of quite a different character, in fact the citations given above may be said to be specifically

[1] So far as one writing from the outside can grasp the meaning of what is intentionally expressed in obscure and difficult terms, I gather that the real gist of this 'Secret Wisdom' was an elaborate philosophy of the Divine energies, which represented the whole of the physical Universe as an expression of the Deity in His Creative aspect, the 'Logos,' manifested in matter. It will readily be seen how this could be brought into line with the Christian Creed, 'By Whom all things were made'; also that it might be confused with Pantheism, which it really is not. Again, it was held that by union with the Divine in the Mysteries the necessity for re-incarnation could be evaded (cf. on this point *Voyage of Bran*, chap. xvi.); the Early Fathers believed in pre-existence; man was an expression of the Deity, he came from the Divine, sufficiently tested and purified, he would ultimately return to the Divine; the Mysteries were a 'short cut' to this longed-for goal.

characteristic of the Alexandrian school. It is possible that the growing preponderance of Rome, that mistress of government and practical organisation, a preponderance which had for result the transformation of Christianity from an originally Oriental to a definitely Occidental religion, was the determining factor. But the teaching was continued as a living force by the Gnostics, and it was impossible for those under the ban of Heterodoxy not to recognise that much of what they held had not so long since been Orthodox, and to cling to their faith with the determined loyalty of the adherents of a lost cause. The inevitable consequence was that a certain formulated body of doctrine was handed on as a secret tradition, and as such, passed down the Middle Ages, and has been continued even to our day.

So far as one writing from the outside can ascertain, the true position seems to have been this: the Mysteries had disappeared, they did not survive the Gnostic period, but a current of mystic tradition preserving the knowledge obtained in the Mysteries was retained. This fell into two streams, that of mystic knowledge, and that of mystic contemplation; there are Mystics and Mystics, and some are by no means to be credited with the possession of unorthodox knowledge. But here and again we meet with one whose teaching is admittedly of a genesis difficult to determine. Such an one was the Irishman, John Erigena, 'the intellectual giant who dominates the (ninth) century,' as Mr. Nutt puts it. The passage[1] is too long to quote, but I would ask my readers to examine the pages in which Mr. Nutt states the problem as to whether the system of Erigena is borrowed from pre-Christian Irish mythology, or whether the texts which preserve the records of that

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 102-107.

mythology have been redacted under the influence of Erigena's teaching. For us, the significant point lies in this, that Erigena is one of those who are definitely stated by writers on the subject to have held, and passed on, the tradition of the Secret Wisdom. Here then, the lines meet, and meet precisely on that ground where we have previously postulated the existence of an atmosphere favourable to the preservation of such teaching.

My view then is that, while our Grail Romances in no way depend, as writers of the exclusively Mystic School insist, upon this secret Christian tradition, rather can be proved to have started on their career absolutely unaffected by it (the Bleheris version has no trace of such teaching), it is yet highly probable, if not actually demonstrable, that they owe their final form, and their translation into the terms of high Christian symbolism, to the existence of such a body of teaching. The stories are, and are consciously, a blend of Pagan and Christian terminology, belief, and practice, but such a blend is dependent upon a recognition of a certain '*contenu*' common alike to the Old Faith and the New.[1]

[1] With regard to the position of this teaching at the period with which we are concerned, I have found it impossible to obtain exact information. I wrote to Mr. G. R. S. Mead, the learned translator of the Gnostic texts, but he tells me the Mediæval period is outside the limit of his studies. I offer the following hypothesis, which in my opinion affords a possible and rational method of bridging the gulf. The Mystic tradition had, as said above, divided into two streams, that of contemplation, and that of knowledge . we may call them the subjective and the objective methods. The former, which was more or less Orthodox, was characteristic of the West; in the twelfth century its religious headquarters were the Abbey of St. Victor near Paris. The objective side, preserved mainly in the East, found, at that period, its centre at Byzantium. At that moment East and West were in close and constant contact; and it would have been quite

Now if we accept this as the true theory of the genesis of the Grail legend, how does it affect the position of the Grail Winners? Does it throw any light upon their sequence and position in the Cycle?

possible for men imbued with Mystic ideas visiting Byzantium, either as Crusaders or as Palmers, to come in touch with, and regain, a portion of the lost knowledge, and to act as transmitters between East and West. It seems, further, that we might here find the explanation of the perplexing 'Templar' element in our literature. If the Templars had acquired the Secret Tradition of the Sources of Life, and the practices connected with that tradition, it is at once clear how they came into the Grail romances, and how they fell under the ban of the Church. Of course the stream runs underground and is difficult to trace, but as we shall see immediately Freemasonry retains to-day traces of the terminology of the *Perceval* story; few dispute the antiquity and persistence of the Masonic tradition, which is but another stream from the same inexhaustible source; by analogy we may, I think, consistently admit the vitality and persistence of the branch with which we are here dealing. While this note was in the press a study by Professor Golther, *Parzival und der Gral, in deutscher Sage des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Munich 1908) came into my hands. The writer, while reiterating his belief in Chrétien de Troyes as source and origin of the Grail literature, commits himself to this definite statement (p. 2): *Was Perceval sieht ist das Mysterium der byzantinischen Messliturgie.* Now this is an impossible explanation; no Catholic writer of the twelfth or twentieth century would dare to transport the 'Mystery of the Mass' to a banqueting hall and make it the centre of a *roman d'aventure*—there are things *qui ne se font pas*, and this is one of them. A fragmentary tradition of a Pagan ritual, which had already been incorporated in story literature, might easily assimilate certain Christian features, but that is quite another thing. Also there was no *Mysterium* in the Byzantine rite not equally shared by the Roman, Mozarabic, or Sarum; if the 'Mystery of the Mass' were the 'Mystery of the Grail,' Perceval's Quest would have ended in the Hermit's cell on Easter morning! But I welcome Dr. Golther's admission of Byzantine influence, and if he will now make careful enquiries into the position assigned to Byzantium as guardian of the Secret Tradition, I think he will modify the theory expressed in the study referred to.

In my opinion the evidence is most illuminating. We have three Grail Winners: Gawain, Perceval, and Galahad; of these three the first and last I hold to have an organic connection with the material with which we are dealing. Gawain is as closely connected with pre-Christian myth as Galahad is with Mediæval Christian symbolism; these two, *pace* the writers who are horrified at the idea of Gawain in such a character, are real, genuine, Grail heroes.

The essentially mythic character of the hero we know as Gawain has long been recognised. In a Study on the subject, published some years ago,[1] I brought forward a considerable amount of evidence in favour of his being originally a Sun hero; the well-known trait of his strength increasing and diminishing with the waxing and waning of the sun; his possession of a sun weapon, the sword Escalibor (probably originally belonging to him, and not to Arthur) which is said to have given a light as of two torches; of a special steed, etc.

In the course of the very exhaustive series of studies on *The European Sky and Tree God*, communicated by Mr. A. B. Cook to the pages of Folk-Lore,[2] and referred to in the

[1] *The Legend of Sir Gawain* (Grimm Library. vol. VII.). This Study was my first essay in constructive criticism of the Arthurian cycle, and naturally leaves much to be desired. I relied for my authorities upon printed texts and abstracts, whereas I now recognise that nothing but independent, first-hand MS. research can yield really reliable results. Nevertheless I hold the work in question to be incomplete rather than incorrect; the conclusions I drew were, I believe, in the main sound, and my view of the original character of Gawain remains now what it was then.

[2] The Study in question extends over several vols. of *Folk-Lore*; the section here dealt with will be found in vol. xvi. pp. 308 *et seq.* The treatment of the subject is exhaustive, the parallels adduced throughout extremely numerous, and no critic can afford to neglect this important contribution to the literature of the subject; nor should the theory advanced above be rejected till the evidence collected by Mr. Cook has been examined.

previous chapter, the author touches on the character and personality of Gawain, whom he, too, accepts as originally of mythic origin, a Sun-god or Sun-king. In the section dealing with the Celtic Tree-god Mr. Cook went fully into the stories of *Syr Gawayne and the Grene Knyghte* and *The Weddynge of Syr Gawayne*, and came to the conclusion that the opponent of the hero in the first tale was the Celtic Tree-god; his bride, in the second, the female counterpart of that deity.[1]

Now at the time these articles were written I had not read my paper on *The Grail and the Rites of Adonis*,[2] and had barely entered upon the path of investigation which has led to such startling results, yet the final outcome of our enquiries, conducted absolutely independently the one of the other, shows the most extraordinary correspondence. Mr. Cook finds that Gawain, as a solar hero, is closely connected with Nature rites and worship; and that two of the most important tales told of him have a distinct 'Vegetation' character. I have found that the Grail legend itself took its origin from these rites; that the oldest extant version of the story has Gawain for its hero; and that the *Grene Knyghte* story was certainly *The*

[1] In the Irish form of the story the challenger is undoubtedly the human representative of the Oak-tree. The Knight, in the English tale is as I noted above, not only clad in green, but has green hair and beard, and rides a green horse; in his hand he carries a bough of holly. Mr. Cook points out that the holly was also a sacred tree among the Celts, and that there appears to be a connection between the oak and the holly which would make a transition from the one to the other natural.

[2] The section dealing with Gawain appeared in September 1906, my paper on the Adonis ritual was not read till December of that year.

Weddynge, probably a test to which the winner of the Grail must submit.[1]

Again, the Welsh name of the hero is significant. According to Professor Rhys Gwalchmai means hawk (or falcon) of May. Now students of nature cults do not need to be reminded that of all months in the year May is perhaps that of most importance for Vegetation ritual. It is then that the complete awakening of the god from his winter sleep to the full activities of summer is celebrated. *The Golden Bough* is rich in evidence of the originally Pagan and ritual character of the popular May-day festivities I am now, in view of the whole body of evidence, inclined to believe that to the hero we know as Gwalchmai-Gawain was ascribed the supreme feat of breaking the spell which fettered the energies of the Vegetation god, and arousing him to full life, and activity. I say breaking the spell, for I think that the head-cutting episode may well be at once a test of the hero's valour, and a release of his Challenger from enchantment. And so closely are ritual and drama

[1] Dr. Brugger (*Zeitschrift fur Franz. Sprache*, vol. xxxiii Heft 2, p. 59) objects to my claim that Gawain is of purely Insular origin. He asserts that he is not identical with Gwalchmai (on which point *cf.* later), and that our English *Gawain* poems are all translated from the French. Now if Bleheris be really Bledri Latinarius, of which I think there can be no reasonable doubt, then he would almost certainly have told the tales to his Norman-French friends in French, but they would none the less be Welsh, or rather Celtic, tales, told in a Celtic land by a Celt. The *Grene Knyghte* must certainly have been told in French, nevertheless the fact remains that by far the finest version of the tale is precisely that preserved in English. *The Weddynge* is in English alone. I think we are fully entitled to insist upon the fact that these two tales, at once important in themselves, and, as research is more and more bringing to light, still more important for the criticism of the *Gawain* tradition, are best represented in Insular versions.

connected that I should not be surprised to find that such symbolic ritual had at one time actual dramatic representation, the participants in these rites not only weeping over the bier of the dead god, but witnessing his restoration to life; and that Gwalchmai, the Hawk of May, was the official title of the actor to whom fell the rôle of Sun-god, and awakener of the Vegetation king.[1]

And here I think we have an argument in favour of the contention brought forward by me in my *Adonis* paper, *i.e.* that the form in which the Grail story has been preserved to us was conditioned, not by an immediate record of the rites themselves, but by an outsider's account of those rites—that it is the record of one who stumbled unaware upon their celebration, and failed to fulfil the conditions necessary for enlightenment as to their significance. For the story, as we have seen, is beyond any doubt an Initiation story; Gawain, being no mere man, but a mythical being, connected *ab origine* with the very *materia* of these rites, could neither fail, nor need Initiation. I think the story took form and shape for reasons apart from its mythic significance, but connected with its place in actual fact, and that Bleheris (or it may be one before him) knowing alike the true meaning of the tale, and Gwalchmai-Gawain's connection with it, made him the hero. If we

[1] I think that Gwalchmai was very possibly only an appellative title connected with the hero in his mythic character as a Sun-god. I am encouraged in this view by the fact that Horus, the son of Isis, who plays a similar rôle in the Mysteries, is Hawk-headed, and that his name is used as a title, those conversant with such matters speaking of '*a* Horus.' 'Each year salvation came to Egypt with the waters just in time to save the land from drought and famine—and the bringer of (the salvation) was Horus, the Saviour' (*Ancient Egypt*, Massey, pp. 743-44); *i.e.* Horus, like Gawain, removes the curse of the Waste Land.

could recover the original Grail sequence, for the tales, or tests, must have formed a sequence, I think we should find that there was but one visit to the castle, but that visit was preceded by a series of tests. It will be well understood that such a story would vary if told from the inside, the mythic, or from the outside, the human, and Initiatory, aspect. Gawain belongs to the first, Perceval to the second class of hero, and the versions as we have them are all of this second character; the original *Gawain-Grail* story was probably different. In any case, in view of the evidence given above, I do not think we should any longer withhold from Gawain his rightful place of honour, as first on the roll of winners of the Grail.

In this light too, his deposition from that post is easily explicable; he was a non-Christian hero, connected with non-Christian ritual; when the story was once fairly started on its course of translation into terms of definite Christian symbolism, it was felt that a hero whose character and personality were less deeply and thoroughly permeated with non-Christian ideas was desirable. I have before now drawn attention to the close connection of Gawain with the Otherworld, its Queen, and countless maiden dwellers;[1] add to this the aspect assumed by the Life cults on their lowest side, and we have no cause to seek further for the grounds alike of Gawain's supersession as Grail hero, or for the peculiar transformation which his character underwent at the hand of later romance writers.

But why, when a successor to Gawain had to be found, did the choice fall upon Perceval?

The more deeply I penetrated into the intricacies of Arthurian romance, the more difficult I found it to account

[1] Cf. *Legend of Sir Gawain*, where a chapter is devoted to this subject.

for the appearance of Perceval in this rôle. So far as I could discover, there was absolutely nothing in his original story which should give an opening for such a development, and, what was more striking still, the more the essential characteristic of the Christian Grail Winner, a certain mystic asceticism, was insisted upon, the more drastic became the sacrifice of the original *données* of the Perceval story. One version only, the *Parzival*, by a radical remodelling of the Grail element, has succeeded in presenting a coherent version of the legend, at once true to the essentially human character of the story, and to its possibilities as a vehicle of spiritual edification. But this much is to me absolutely clear: when the *Perceval* and *Grail* stories meet, one has to go under; sometimes it is the one, sometimes the other, but it is radically impossible for the two to combine, and for each to keep its original character.[1]

What then is the explanation? A very simple, but extraordinarily illuminating one. Perceval was originally known as *le fis de la veuve dame*; when and how he acquired the name by which we know him, I can make no suggestion. *Sons of the Widow* is a very wide-spread synonym for Initiates. The Grail story was, as we have seen, an Initiation story; Perceval's title, perfectly natural given the *données* of his legend, suggested that he was an Initiate, and he stepped into Gawain's shoes.

This is the final piece of evidence which, as indicated above,[2] I received from the friend to whose suggestions I owe so much, and its importance as offering the natural solution of a very perplexing problem of Arthurian literature can hardly be overestimated. The term is still in

[1] Cf. vol. i. p. 171.

[2] Cf. *supra*, p. 288.

use in Freemasonry, where Masons of a certain degree call themselves *Children of the Widow*; indeed, so widespread is its use, that I found it practically impossible to make my informant believe that the appellation, in a mediæval tale, could have had other than a mystic significance, that Perceval could be a *Son of the Widow* in a perfectly simple and natural sense, his father being dead.[1]

Employed in this mystic sense the Widow is the earth, bereft during the winter season of the rays of the sun. Here I would quote a suggestive passage from *The Voyage of Bran*, where Mr. Nutt refers to 'Professor Rhys's explanation of the term Lugnasad, as Lug's Marriage, *i.e.* the wedding of the Sun god and the Earth, from which the

[1] The term was used in the Egyptian Mysteries of Horus, who was supposed to have been born after the murder of Osiris (*Ancient Egypt*, p. 769); a sect of the Manichaeans were known as *Sons of the Widow*, and my friend has sent me a fragment of a Masonic chant, relative to Hiram of Tyre, who, as most people know, is supposed to have been closely connected with the foundation of Freemasonry, and who also bore this title:—

> 'To him who did the Temple rear,
> The pious memory of the Widow's Son of Tyre,
> . . . . .
> Who now lies buried, none knows where
> Save we, who Master-Masons are'
> (*Text-Book of Free-Masonry*, p. 185)

I would wish to say here that this information was not given with relation to Perceval's connection with the story, but as a comment upon a remark in my paper on the 'Adonis' ritual, that MS. B. N. 337 F. alludes to Perceval as *le fis de la veuve dame*, while his father the 'Maimed King' is yet alive. My point was the persistence of the idea that this personage was at once *dead* and *alive*. Dr. Sommer (*Galahad and Perceval*, p. 9) commits himself to the statement that Perceval is of course 'never the son of the "Maimed King"'—he is, and the possibility of his being so is carefully explained. *Cf.* also Chrétien.

life-giving produce of the soil was to spring. This sacred marriage is, as we know, a wide-spread feature of the agricultural ritual studied by Mannhardt and Dr. Frazer as underlying the polytheistic mythology of Greeks and Germans.'[1] This quotation will show that we are here dealing with a term which falls well within the area of belief and practice connected with the Grail.

It seems to me that, even as Gawain's position as Grail hero, and his supersession in that character, became clear once the true character of the material with which we were dealing was ascertained, so the process by which Perceval followed in his steps, and won, and forfeited, the post of honour, is equally clear. With the determination of this point, the claims of Chrétien de Troyes to be the originator of the Grail literature fall for ever to the ground. He only knew, can only have known, the story in its secondary stage; of the true significance, of the original hero, he knows absolutely nothing.[2]

The genesis of Galahad is manifest · on the one side there was the recognition, by those writers who understood the true character of the Grail tradition, that Perceval, his suggestive title notwithstanding, had no real connection with this group of belief and practice, was no Initiate, but a hero whose story ran on the simplest, most human, lines. Nay, one who was indeed notably lacking in one of the essential qualifications, that of intelligence; the Initiate must be one capable of assimilating, and profiting by knowledge beyond the capacity of the ordinary man.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 186.

[2] I think it most probable that Chrétien knew the story in the Pellinor form, *i.e.* in which Perceval's father is the *Maimed King*; *cf.* the mother's statement as to the character of the wound, *parmi le cuisses.*

Perceval was a *Dümmling*! His story, a charming story, was popular in, and for, itself, and so far from gaining, lost by insistence on the mystic element inseparable from the fully developed Grail legend. On the other hand the growing popularity of Lancelot made insistent demands upon the romance writers, it was quite impossible that he, the most renowned of Arthur's knights, should remain without the charmed circle of effort and achievement; equally impossible that the faithful lover of Guinevere should conform to the standard of ascetic purity demanded of the Initiate. Galahad, the last word of Grail evolution, is the answer to this double demand; he alone of the three is the product of direct literary invention, the son of Christian mysticism, and contemporary literary necessity. He came, because in the fulness of time he had to come, and his coming closed for seven hundred years the creative activities of the Grail; the legend slumbered, to be awakened again in our day to a new and no less glorious life by the genius of Richard Wagner.[1]

This explanation of the nature of the story, and the resulting sequence of heroes, will perhaps throw a light upon a question which has perplexed many students of the subject,[2] *i.e.* the correct relationship between the Fisher King and the Grail Winner. Originally, of course, there

[1] The Welsh name for Galahad, Gwalchaved, with its possible interpretation 'Hawk of June,' is interesting, as equating him with Gawain—Gwalchmai. If the suggestion made above is correct, it would indicate that the writer considered him, rather than Perceval (who never bears any such title), to be Gawain's successor. The *Grand-Saint-Graal* version, of which Galahad is the hero, possesses certain curious points of contact with Welsh hagiology, cf. Mr. Machen's articles in the *Academy* 1907, referred to above, p. 268, n.

[2] Dr. Sommer, in particular, in articles published in *Romania* and *Modern Philology*, 1907-1908, has laid great stress upon this point.

was no relationship. Gawain, a Sun god, is neither nephew, nor grandson, to the god of Vegetation, he is but his deliverer from death, or enchantment. The idea came in, I think, with Perceval; and the relationship to the Fisher-Maimed-King, so long as he remained one personality, was conditioned by the view of the author as to whether the Grail Winner succeeded in right of his mother, (nephew), or in right of his father (grandson). And this view, I think, depends upon which element preponderates; Perceval's mother being always of high rank, if the writer be following the *Perceval* story, he conceives of her as sister to the Grail-King, but where the Grail story is followed, and understood, then the idea of sonship is inherent, and in fulfilment of the essentially three-fold character of the imagery the succession must run to son, or grandson. Much more is this the case where the personality is divided, and Fisher, and Maimed, King treated as two distinct individuals. Then the Fisher King, being the vital principle in its primary form must be the elder, and the Grail Winner would be grandson to the Fisher, nephew to the Maimed King. As a rule it may be laid down that, while Perceval may with propriety be represented in either relationship, Galahad must be the grandson, for when the Galahad versions were composed the personality had become divided, and moreover, the original composer of the *Queste* knew what he was writing about. But in this question so much depends upon the knowledge of the copyist, and his view of the Grail, that it is in the highest degree unsafe to build a theory of text relationship upon the variants of nephew and grandson.

This then is the evidence which I have to offer upon the mysterious and fascinating subject of the Grail. I think any reader, who has carefully perused the preceding

chapter, cannot fail to admit that the additional material here given considerably strengthens the arguments previously advanced. We can see now, both how such a story, in its pre-Christian form, could have been preserved, and how, when the Christianising process had started at its lowest, and most obvious, point of contact (the similarity of certain of the images employed to the objects of the Passion), the process could have been carried to completion on the basis of an existing secret tradition which recognised an identity of *contenu* between Christianity and earlier faiths. Given the existence of such beliefs, Christian and pre-Christian, as those I have endeavoured to sketch in this chapter, and I submit that a process of literary development, such as I described in the last, is perfectly possible.

And I would further ask, does not such a theory cover the ground with a completeness hitherto unattained? We have here no correspondence with this or that feature, while another equally important, remains unparalleled, and unexplained; no question of elucidating and placing one version while another remains obscure; the interpretation holds good all along the line. It explains the incidents; it explains the terminology; the Fisher King, the Maimed King, the Wasted Land, the Question, the Sword Test; all are clear. There is no feature of the story left outside the framework; it explains the sequence of winners, and their *raison d'être*, it gives us the necessary atmosphere; it affords the necessary *data* for co-ordinating and grouping the different versions; may we not claim that we at last hold in our hands the master-key wherewith to unlock the 'secrets of the Grail'?

But if it really be so, if I indeed have succeeded where so many have failed, then I would wish in all seriousness

to say that I claim no credit for such success; I have not sought longer nor more diligently than they, but I hold that it is as true to-day as of old, that the Grail Castle is found by favour not by knowledge; and that Wagner spoke the truth concerning the Grail when he put these words into the mouth of Gurnemanz:—

> Bist Du zu ihm erkoren,
> Bleibt Dir die Kunde unverloren
>
> *Parsifal*, Act I.

[1] The evidence brought together in this chapter is only a very concise and abridged statement of the case. I have simply selected those extracts which appeared to me most characteristic of the teaching I was endeavouring to explain. If any reader wishes to go more fully into the subject, the whole of vol. II. of *The Voyage of Bran* should be read (I believe it is only in the light of the foregoing suggestions that the full worth and importance of Mr. Nutt's work will be recognised); the *Ante-Nicene Library* should be consulted; I could have multiplied my citations ten-fold; and Mr. Mead's translations of the works of the Gnostics should be read. The series *Echoes from the Gnosis* includes certain 'Initiation' texts of a most curious and illuminating character; cf. also *Thrice Greatest Hermes* by same author. A useful handbook on the subject is *Esoteric Christianity* (Besant); the Patristic citations are very numerous, they are made from another edition than that which I used, but I compared the two, and found in every case the translation was identical, and may be relied upon as correct. I am of opinion now, that it should be perfectly possible to write a really scientific *History of the Grail Legend*, provided a scholar, who was at once a thorough Classicist, a trained Folk-lorist, a Theologian, a Mystic, and who had a first-hand knowledge of the Grail texts, were forthcoming; and after all, such a combination of gifts is not unattainable. Let us hope this book may fall into the hands of one who may feel impelled to qualify for the task!

APPENDIX

CHAPTER X. had been written for some months, and both X. and XI. were already in print, when the possibility of a most important development of the subject suggested itself. As noted above (p. 255), Alchemy is but another form of the Life Quest. The so-called 'Philosopher's Stone' I knew to be no mere transmuter of metals, but to possess a much fuller, and more mystical, significance. It suddenly flashed into my mind: what if this be the Stone of the *Parzival*? I recalled the statements made concerning the nature of the Talisman and its close connection with physical life; the passage was extraordinarily illuminating :—

'sie lebent von einem steine:
des geslahte ist vil reine.
hât ir des niht erkennet
der wirt iu hie genennet.
er heizet lapsit exillîs.
von des stéines kraft der fênîs
verbrinnet, daz er z'aschen wirt:
diu asche im aber leben birt.
sus rêrt der fênîs mûze sîn
unt gît dar nâch vil liehten schîn,
daz er scoene wirt als ê.
ouch wart nie ménschén sô wê,
swelhes táges ez den stein gesiht,
die wochen mac ez sterben niht,
diu aller schierst dar nâch gestêt.
sin varwe im niemer ouch zergêt:
man muoz im sölher varwe jehen,
dâ mite ez hât den stein gesehen,
ez sî maget ode man,
als dô sîn bestiu zît huop an,
saeh'ez den stein zwei hundert jâr,
im enwúrde denne grâ sîn hâr.
selhe kráft dem menschen gît der stein,

daz im fleisch unde bein
jugent enpfaeht al sunder twâl,
der stein ist ouch genant der grâl.'

Parzival, book IX., ll. 1083-1108.

I would draw attention to the wording of the last line, 'the stone is also called "the Grail,"' *i.e.* we are dealing with two aspects of the same object. The words '*lapsit exillis*,' which have caused so much discussion, I take to be merely the mutilation of a Latin phrase, in which the Stone, which has no name, was described; the words probably ran, '*—lapis, ex illis—*.' The rest of the phrase has been lost; some copyist or reciter, ignorant of Latin (perhaps Wolfram himself), took the words *ex illis* to be an adjective.

I at once made enquiries of those among my friends whom I knew to possess occult knowledge, with the following interesting results.

There is an occult tradition of the existence, somewhere, of a mysterious stone, the most precious thing on earth, upon which all life depends. *In the Middle Ages it was supposed that it was by virtue of this stone that the Phœnix renewed its youth.* (My informant had never read the *Parzival*, and had no idea that the Grail was ever described as a stone. I had only asked if the Source of Life could be so described!) Some authorities were inclined to identify this stone with the mysterious Kaaba of Mecca, which, my informant continued, is a meteoric stone. (Here, of course, he came into touch with Dr. Hagen's theory of the Baetylus Stone.) In this special branch of Life Study the agents are held to be Moisture and Stone, which stand to each other, as positive and negative, in the same relation as do Lance and Cup in the Phallic tradition. In Alchemy we find them as the so-called Elixir of Life and Philosopher's Stone. The stone of course plays an important rôle in Masonry and in Rosicrucianism.[1] I have

[1] The four treasures of the Tuatha de Danann are: Sword of the Dagda, whose life-bestowing capacities, especially in relation to agriculture, are manifold and well attested; Spear of Lug, *i.e.* the Sun-

received these assurances from three independent sources, each informant, however, being a 'practising' Mystic.

With this evidence before us, it is, I think, perfectly clear that the Stone of the *Parzival* really is 'the Grail,' *i.e.* the Source of Life, though, without closer and more detailed study, it would be rash to say whether the poem be based upon a merely general tradition, such as is referred to above, or upon a specific 'Alchemical' symbolism. In either case the change must, I think, be ascribed to Kiot, and not to Wolfram; the man who composed the *Parzival* must have had a very accurate knowledge of the Life Quest, and have known that it could correctly be represented under more than one form. I see no ground for ascribing such knowledge to the Bavarian knight.

And here is a point to which I would draw attention. we are confronted, in the case of Kiot, with precisely the same problem which meets us in that of Borron. We again have a writer understanding completely and thoroughly the character of his material, of whose constructive ability there can here be no manner of doubt (as I have noted before, the composer of the *Parzival* is the only writer of the cycle '*qui sait maîtriser sa matière*,' the only one who has constructed a complete and coherent *Perceval-Grail* poem); yet he acts precisely as Borron acted, he presents the central symbol under a different form, but keeps the setting intact. Fisher-King, Maimed-King, Lance, all belong to the Grail as Vessel, not to the Grail as Stone. They are more out of place in the *Parzival* than in Borron, and yet he preserves them!

Why? I cannot evade the conclusion that this particular setting was invested with a character of authority which for-

God of the Celtic Pantheon, the father and prototype of Cuchullin, the Sun Hero; plenty-giving Cauldron; and *Lia Fail*, usually rendered in English as Stone of Destiny. Its function was to announce the rightful king. But when one considers the function of the king in the mythological stage to which the Tuatha de Danann stories go back, *i.e.* that he was the representative element, so to speak, of the Potency of Life, may not the Lia Fail be regarded as a Life Talisman? (A.N.)

bade any alteration, and I can only explain that character by the theory maintained above, that the imagery of the story was founded upon the actual details of a wide-spread and awe-inspiring ritual. And I would note here that, while Borron changed the symbolism from the Occult to the definitely Ecclesiastical-Spiritual, thereby heightening this character, Kiot changed back from Ecclesiastical-Spiritual to Occult; here probably lies the reason for the disappearance of what must have been a truly remarkable poem.

That this identification of the *Parzival* Stone with the Grail is a conclusive proof of the correctness of my general interpretation of the true meaning of the Grail Quest, can hardly be denied; a theory which not only explains naturally and inevitably the imagery and terminology employed, but also brings, as naturally and inevitably, for the first time into line with the other Grail romances that version which has hitherto been the *crux* of any system of interpretation, can, I submit, be none other than the true solution of our problem.

CHAPTER XII

THE MORT ARTUS

We now arrive at the final stage of our investigation, and approach that section of our subject which, in my opinion, offers the key to the solution of the Borron problem. I have, in the course of these studies, more than once expressed my view that the author of the cycle had before him, and freely used, a metrical chronicle which was either a fuller version of the *Brut* of Wace than any we now possess, or was a working over of Wace's chronicle by one desirous of introducing features which the earlier writer had omitted, possibly also of imparting a more romantic character to the story. I also suggested that this particular version, which combines Wace's lines with features found only in Layamon, might afford a solution of the much debated question of the sources of this latter.

To prove my point I will go at once to the heart of the problem, omitting the 'Frollo' section which, in both *Perceval* MSS., is given in too compressed a form to afford reliable data for criticism.[1]

On page 84 we read of the arrival of the Roman messengers, and their challenge to Arthur; in the source their speech probably ran somewhat thus:

[1] In both, the first battle and subsequent siege are omitted, and though the general details of the single combat agree, there is not the close verbal correspondence we find elsewhere.

En mervellant nous desdagnons,
Et en desdagnant mervellons,
Que si viels gens comme vous estes,
Et estes serf de vos testes,
Que tos li siecles vous doit despire,
Et or vous volés enfrancir . . .
. . . . . .
A Julius César rendistes treu
Et autre rois l'ont reçëu,
Ne onques nul jor sans servage
Ne vesquistes (en vostre ëage). (p. 95, ll 13-22.)

In Wace we find:

Mult me desdaigne en mervellant,
Et me mervel en desdagnant,
Que par forfait, et par orgoel,
Oser vers moi olvrir ton oel.[1] vv. 10923-26.

and further on:

Julius César nostre ancestre
. . . . . .
Prist Bretagne, si ot trëu
Et li nostre l'ont puis ëu. vv. 10953-56.

On page 96 of our text we read (ll. 5 and 6):

'Vous ne sarés pas en cel liu aler ne fuir qu'il ne vous en jet.'

[1] The Vulgate *Merlin* has followed the usual Wace version: '*si mesmerveil et moult me vient a grant desdaing que il par son grant forfait et par son grant orguel veut reveler vers Rome*' (ed. Sommer, p. 455). A comparison of the texts is interesting; the Vulgate *Merlin* is certainly drawn from Wace; Cador, and his arguments are reproduced summarily, and the same illustrations given, but condensed to extreme brevity. I am beginning to doubt whether there were not two *Merlin* versions, partially based upon two distinct 'chronicle' sources.

Wace says:

Ne saras en cel liu tapir
Que jo ne l'en face salir vv. 10986-7.

Here we may note that in Wace the message takes the form of a letter from the Emperor, and is therefore couched in the first person singular throughout. In *M.A.* the messengers speak *for* the Emperor, and the third person singular, or first person plural is used. This is the case also in Layamon.

Both in Wace and in our text the example of Belins and Brennes is cited to encourage Arthur in taking active steps against the Emperor, but Wace gives a much briefer *résumé* than we find in *M.A.* Our author has taken advantage of the opportunity to give a detailed account of the feats of the brothers. In both cases the prophecy of the Sibyl is quoted, and here Wace's version is significant:

Membre toi que Sibile dist
Es prophésies que ele escrit
Que trois rois de Bretaigne istroient
Qui Rome à force conquerroient
. . . . .
Tu es li ters qui Rome auras
Et à force la conquerras,
En toi sera la profésie
Que Sibile dist acomplie. vv. 11208-19.

Compare this with Merlin's statement on page 11 of our text: 'Si vuel que vous saciés qu'il a eu .ij. rois en Bretagne qui ont esté roi de France, et empereor de Rome, et je vuel bien que vous saciés que en Bretagne sera encore li tiers rois qui rois et emperere en sera, et le

conquerra a force sor les Romains.' Above (page 129), I drew attention to the lines:

> Et emperere en sera
> Et a force le conquerra.

The reference to Sibile has been preserved in *D*.

This passage not only offers additional proof of the use of the metrical chronicle, but also demonstrates the unity of the two sections. *Perceval* and *Mort Artus* were compiled by the same hand, and the 'Arthur' material in both is drawn from the same source.[1] We may note here that it is the authority of Merlin, not of the Sibile, which is appealed to, *i.e.* the passage in *M.A.* was composed with direct reminiscence of, and reference to, that in *P*.

The councillors of the Emperor in our text bid him ' cevauce à force, et passe les mons, at en après le mer, et conquerres Bretaigne,' etc., p. 101, l. 15. In Wace:

> A l'Empereor l'ont loé
> Et en consel li ont rové
> Que tost son empire mandast
> Mont Giu et Borgogne passast
> Al roi Artus se combatist
> Regne et corone li tolist. vv. 11354-59.

At this point our version diverges from the ordinary *Brut*. Wace says that the king of Spain, and Montausar of Africa with his Moors, come to the aid of Lucius, but we have no mention of the Soudan's daughter, of the Emperor's apparent lapse from the Faith, and the scandal thereby caused to the folk. The war is one between two Christian kings, not between Christian and Paynim, as in our text. This is a very decided difference; and as we

[1] Cf. *supra*, pp. 129, 130.

shall see presently, Layamon, while agreeing in the details of the war with Wace, shows distinct signs of a knowledge of our version.

We touch Wace again, but with a difference, in the errand of Arthur's messengers to the Roman camp; in the *Brut* the noble whose death brings about the outbreak of hostilities is the Emperor's nephew, Quintilian, and the provocation is on his side:

> Ses niés estoit mult orgillos
> Mult fiers et mult contralios,
> 'Breton, dist il, sont vantéor,
> Et todis sont menacéor,
> Menaces et vantances ont,
> Assés menacent et poi font' vv 12150-55.

In our text Gawain is the aggressor, and the passage must have run somewhat thus:

> Et molt l'Empereor laidoia,
> Tant qu'a .j. legat en pesa:
> Et dist 'Tostans sont bordéor
> Li Breton, et (menacéor)
> Vantéor, et mal parlier,
> (Taisiés vous) mauvais chevalier,
> (Certés) se vous en parlés plus
> Vos sacierai del cheval jus' (p. 103, ll 14-17)

The last two lines might be differently rendered, but the verse original is assured, and that original was not our *Brut*.

Here we may note that Layamon, too, assigns the rôle of aggressor to Gawain:

> þo a-balh ȝaweyn
> And wreþþede him swiþe. vol. iii. p. 47

The accounts of the war are very complicated, and the

fact that both of our texts, *M.* and *D.*, are defective and testify to a much fuller original, renders a detailed criticism impracticable; we could not hope to arrive at any really satisfactory result, but I would draw attention to a passage which Layamon introduces into Arthur's speech, and to which Wace affords no parallel :

> And þis beoð þa for-cuðeste men
> Of alle quike monnen,
> Hœðene leode :
> Godd heo feondeð laðe.
> Ure drihten heo bilœveð,
> And to Mahune heo tuhteð,
> And Luces þe kæisere :
> Of Godd seolf naveð nane care,
> Þat hafveð to iveren
> Haðene hundes,
> Goddes wiðer iwinen. vol. iii. pp. 88-89.

(And these are the worst men of all men alive, heathen people (hounds), to God they are loathsome, Our Lord they desert, and to Mahoun they draw. And Luces the Emperor of God's self hath no care, who hath for companions heathen hounds, God's enemies.)

The significant point here is that there is nothing in Layamon previously to justify such an outbreak, but the terms in which it is couched correspond precisely with the incidents related in our text.

From the conclusion of the war with the Romans the correspondence with Wace ceases. The section dealing with Mordred's treachery and Arthur's death is much abridged, but there are correspondences with Layamon, as against Wace, which are of considerable interest from a critical point of view. Wace does not say how Arthur

becomes aware of Mordred's treachery, simply that he knows it:

> Artus oi et bien savoit
> Que Mordret foi ne li portoit
> Son raine trait, sa fame a prise,
> Ne li fait mie bel servise.
> Sa gent à Hoel mi parti
> France et Borgogne li guerpi. vv. 13337-42.

This is all he has to say on a subject which provided Layamon with one of his finest opportunities, an opportunity of which he was not slow to take full and admirable advantage. All students of the cycle are familiar with the account of the arrival of the messenger, his unwillingness to impart the evil tidings, Arthur's warning dream, the indignation of the barons, and Gawain's outbreak of dramatic wrath, and appeal to Heaven, of all of which there is no trace in the *Brut* (vol. iii., pp. 127 *et seq*).

Our text is, as is said above, compressed, but the source must have been akin to that of Layamon, for we have an account of the arrival of the messengers and their tidings, a passage which in the original must, I think, have been in good and spirited verse, as witness the closing phrases:

> Et miels vous vient li vostre terre
> Que (terre) d'autrui conquerre. (p. 108, ll. 21-22.)

On the same page reference is made to the anger and shame felt by Gawain and King Lot.

Again, Wace simply tells us that Mordred knew what was passing in Arthur's host:

> Mordrès sot d'Artu le repaire. v. 13459.

Layamon dwells on the fact that he had spies in the

king's army (vol. iii., pp. 128 and 130). *M.A.* also states this fact, p. 190, ll. 2 and 3.

But the most notable divergence is in the account of Gawain's death. Wace simply says:

> Ocis i fu Gavains ses niés,
> Artus ot de lui dolor grant
> Car il n'amoit nul home tant.
>
> vv. 13506-8.

Layamon tells us he was killed by a Saxon earl, '*sorry be that man's soul*,' but does not say in what manner, and also gives Arthur's lament over him and Angel king of Scotland, slain at the same time.

In our text we are told that a Saxon struck Gawain on the head with an oar and killed him, thus supplementing Layamon's account; and then the reciter breaks out into a lamentation which must originally have been in verse:

> Quant li buens quens Gavains fu mors
> (Certes) ce fu molt grant dolors,
> Ahi Dex, com c'estoit grant damage!
> Il estoit biaus, loiaus, et sage.
> Il estoit buens justiciers,
> Il estoit buens cevaliers,
> En jugement droiturniers estoit
> Et (tostans) bel parler savoit.
>
> (p. 109, ll. 15, 18.)

There can be no doubt that here the source of our text was nearer to Layamon than to Wace.

The concluding passages differ from both, and so far I have not been able to find a parallel. Elsewhere after his defeat before Winchester Mordred flies to Cornwall, where the final battle takes place. Here he goes to Ireland and takes refuge in an island ruled by a kinsman of Hengist

(a viking?), whither Arthur pursues him, and where both meet their death. Nowhere else have I met with the categoric statement that the Britons waited forty years, before choosing a king; or the identification, familiar to Folk-lorists, of Arthur with the Wild Huntsman, in both Wace and Layamon Constantine, son of Cador, designated by Arthur himself as his successor, becomes king, and carries on a war with the sons of Mordred.[1]

The above parallels are, I think, amply sufficient to establish my contention that the source of Borron's *Mort Artus* section was a metrical French chronicle, differing from any which we now possess, but holding a position midway between Wace and Layamon. What would be the most probable date for such a chronicle? Scholars are of one accord in assigning 1155 as the date of Wace's *Brut*, and 1205 as that of Layamon.[2] This lost version must have come between the two, probably in the last quarter of the twelfth century. This would accord well with the date at which Borron must have written, and I think it not improbable that it was the appearance and popularity of this work which was one of the main factors in bringing about Borron's change of purpose, and was the determining cause of the form which his cycle finally assumed.[3]

There is an extremely interesting passage preserved in MS. B. N. 749, fonds Franç, in which Borron alludes to

[1] I have read through Dr. Fletcher's valuable study, *The Arthurian material in the Chronicles* (Boston, 1906), but without finding any trace of the above.

[2] Cf. *English Literature from the Conquest to Chaucer*, W. H. Schofield, 1906.

[3] I went through the evidence carefully with M. Ferdinand Lot, and both he and M. Paul Meyer entirely agree with me that a version making such use of a *Brut* cannot be later than the end of the twelfth century.

his source in the following terms: '*Et qui vouroit oir conter des rois qui devant furent, et lor vie vouroit oir, si regarde en l'estoire de Bretagne que on apelle Brutus, que messire Martin de Rocester translata de latin en roman ou il le trouva: si le porra savoir vraiement.*[1] Now it is beyond any doubt that Borron did know, and largely use, a *Brut* differing from any which we now possess; if the attribution of authorship be correct, the work must have been of insular compilation, and might therefore very probably incorporate features of insular tradition absent from Wace. But it was, of course, written in French. The existence of such a version would go far towards explaining the peculiarities of Layamon's translation, which on the one side, according to Brown, knew, and utilised, genuine Celtic tradition, and on the other, according to Imelmann, gives the proper names in a form which, throughout, can only be due to a French original.[2] I would therefore suggest that we have here a precious fragment of the lost *Brutus* of Martin of Rochester.

Thus the *Mort Artus* makes its first appearance in the romantic cycle in the form of a simple *mise-en-prose* of a metrical chronicle; its subsequent fate was curious: under the influence of the strongly romantic development, brought about by the incorporation of the *Lancelot* into the cycle, it suffered alike dislocation and transforma-

[1] This passage was first quoted by Paulin Paris in *Romans de la Table Ronde*, vol ii. p. 36, subsequently in Van Vloten's edition of the Dutch *Merlin*, which includes the reference to Martin. Again by Te Winkel, in an article on Borron and Maerlant, while the latest citation was by Dr. Brugger in No. II. of his *Enserrement Merlin* studies (*Zeitsch. Franz. Sprache*, vol. xxxi., p. 182), where the Dutch and English translations are also given.

[2] Cf. A. C. L. Brown, *The Round Table before Wace*, Boston, 1900, and R. Imelmann, *Layamon, Versuch uber seine Quellen*, Berlin, 1906.

tion: the historic features were transferred to the *Merlin* (demand of tribute, and war with Rome) and the *Lancelot* (expedition to France, and defeat of Frollo); and the story became a pure romance, the treachery of Mordred being preserved, but Arthur's absence from Britain motived by his war with Lancelot. The most interesting and suggestive feature in this change is, I think, the incorporation of the pseudo-historic section in the *Lancelot*. My view is that it was brought about as the direct result of the union of that romance with the *Perlesvaus*. I said above[1] that I have never been able to detect any connection between the *Perlesvaus* and any romance of the cycle, save the *Lancelot* only. I believe, moreover, that when that connection was first established the *Lancelot* was *minus* the *Enserrement Merlin* and the *Frollo* episodes, these two I hold to have been added later as substitutes for the full *Merlin* and the *Mort Artus*, both of which are incompatible with the indications of the *Perlesvaus*. The *Merlin* could not have been connected with a version which regarded Arthur as a '*roi fainéant*': it would then have been Merlin, and no other, who roused Arthur to a sense of his duty;[2] and the ordinary *Mort Artus* was impossible, Guenevere being already dead. I think if we could recover the primitive form of the prose *Lancelot* we should find that the *Queste* section preceded the war with Claudas; I think it quite possible that the death of Guenevere was introduced by a writer anxious to combine the later development of the story, in which Lancelot was Guenevere's lover, with the original form in which he regained his kingdom and ended his days there in peace.

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 282 *n*.

[2] On the point of Merlin's attitude towards Arthur, cf. Brugger, *E. M.* No. III (*Zeitsch. Franz. Spr.* xxxiii., p. 146, and *n*. 4).

The queen being dead, there would be no obstacle to such a dénouement.[1]

Thus I differ somewhat from Dr. Brugger's suggested table of development:[2] I should reject his *Perlesvaus-Grail* group and postulate three stages in the development of the *Lancelot-Perlesvaus* cycle: (1) *Lancelot* and *Perlesvaus* only, (2) *Lancelot* plus '*Enserrement Merlin*' plus *Frollo*, and *Perlesvaus*; (3) the final stage, being that proposed by Dr. Brugger, incorporation with the full form of the *Lancelot*, *Merlin*, and *Mort Artus*; though I admit that as to this last I have grave doubts. I cannot feel sure that *Perlesvaus* was ever connected with a *Mort Artus*. This latter romance had already paid tribute, in the loss of its historic elements, and it seems to me more probable that when the *Lancelot* was incorporated in the cyclic version, it was the Quest section which suffered, *Perlesvaus* gave way to the *Queste*. Thus the traces of a *Perceval* quest which remain in the *Lancelot* would go back to the independent form of this latter romance.

And this brings me to the very interesting question of

[1] Some years ago I worked through a number of the *Lancelot* MSS of the Bibl. Nat., making notes of the variants. I then came decidedly to the conclusion that the original *Lancelot* had ended with the war in Brittany, and the reconquest of the hero's patrimony. I also noted the fact of the transference of the historic element (Frollo) from the *M.A.* to the *L.*, without at that time being able to assign any reason for the change. I noted, too, that the characters who play a leading rôle in the Claudas war, Arthur himself, Gawain, and Ywain are characters of the earlier stage of tradition. I drew Dr. Nitze's attention to this, in the winter of 1907, as bearing more upon his line of investigation (I had by then surmised the truth) than mine, and I anticipate interesting developments in his promised edition of the *Perlesvaus*. The 'Claudas' war is, in any case, a subject which would repay closer study. Cf. vol. i., p. 250.

[2] Cf. Brugger, *E.M.* No. I. (*Zeitsch. Franz. Spr.*, vol. xxix., p 138).

the disappearance of Merlin from our text. With the concluding paragraph of the *Perceval*, and the few opening lines of the *Mort Artus*, the activity of Merlin ceases; in fact his rôle in the latter case is merely to announce to Arthur the completion of the adventure of the Grail; the lines in which he is introduced at the conclusion of the *Mort Artus* are, therefore, somewhat of an anti-climax. I am very much inclined to think that Borron looked upon Merlin as connected with the Grail rather than with Arthur (if *Merlin* were in his original scheme he must have done so), but, finding that in his chronicle source, as in other versions, Merlin relates the end of Arthur, he transferred the passage dealing with the enchanter's final disappearance from the world to the conclusion of his cycle.

In an article in the *Revue Celtique*[1] Mr. Nutt recently drew attention to the fact that the enchanter, *par excellence*, of the Tuatha de Danann, Aengus, was the hero of a birth story similar to that of Merlin; the evidence is so far insufficient for the construction of a definite theory, but the fact that it is precisely this group of divinities which has provided us with important material for our study of the Grail development seems to indicate that an enquiry into the connection between Merlin and the Grail might be productive of important results. It is certain that here that connection is closer and more intimate than we have hitherto realised.

On the mysterious concluding passage I can throw no light, I do not know what the 'Esplumeor' was; I doubt if any one does know.[2] It has occurred to me as possible,

[1] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxvii., pp. 325 *et seq.*

[2] I have discussed the point with MM. Paul Meyer, A. Thomas, and Ferd. Lot; all agree that the only meaning assignable to the word,

in view of the determination of Borron's source for this section of the poem, that he may have found the word in that source, where it represented a misreading, or misrendering (due to oral transmission), of a Celtic word. There was certainly an early tradition of Merlin's disappearance from mortal sight, also of his continued prophetic activity under abnormal conditions: I think that the concluding passages of our text repose upon such a tradition, and point to a stage anterior to the '*Enserrement*' motif.[1] Here Merlin's withdrawal is voluntary, and I cannot but think that such a form is more consonant with the dignity and importance of the rôle assigned to him in the pseudo-historic tradition than that of his falling a victim to the wiles of a woman, especially in the '*fabliau*' form postulated by Dr. Brugger for the earliest version of the theme.

To sum up the foregoing evidence, I am of opinion that, in the two MSS. under consideration we possess, in an abridged form, the genuine work of Robert de Borron; the discrepancies and contradictions, the existence of which I am in no way desirous of denying or minimising,

as it stands, is that of a cage, or dark room, where falcons would be kept at the period of moulting, but there is no instance of the actual use of the term in this sense. The instance in the text is unique. M. Lot, as Celticist, agrees that the suggestion made above is possible, but he knows no word which, by deformation, would give such a result.

[1] Cf. here the extracts from the Welsh *Merlin* poems, cited by Dr. Brugger in his *E.M.* Study (*Zeitsch. Franz. Spr.* xxx., p. 233). The passage in which Merlin refers to himself as *the man that speaks from the grave*; and that in which we are told *he is accustomed to make disclosures when a maid goes to him*, seem to me to contain what may well be the germ of all the later romantic developments.

being due to a change of source and intention. Borron's original scheme was the composition of a purely Grail cycle, a series of poems dealing exclusively with the origin and fortunes of the mysterious object known as the Grail. In the inception of this scheme Borron was influenced by his own knowledge of the true character of the Grail, *i.e.* that it formed an integral part of a very elaborate system of instruction as to the ultimate sources of Life, and that the tradition of the Grail Quest was based upon a genuine reminiscence of the ritual distinctive of the objective and popular side of that teaching, those Nature Cults whose extraordinary vitality, persistence, and wide-spread diffusion, have attracted the attention of scholars of our own day.

Borron knew what the story meant, knew also that a body of teaching analogous in its '*contenu*' had once been possessed, and officially taught, by the Church, and, though now discouraged, survived as a secret tradition in the teaching of the Mystics. The Grail story had already been partially, and superficially, Christianised, on the external basis of the similarity existing between the Life symbols of the lowest plane, and the instruments of the Passion; Borron proposed not merely an external 'rapprochement,' but a translation of the whole spirit and formulæ of the secret teaching into Orthodox terms. I even think it probable that for this bold scheme he had some measure of Ecclesiastical sanction; some cleric, more broad-minded than his fellows, possibly himself tinged with Mysticism, lent a favourable ear to the project, for in the prose copies of Borron's colophon we find the unusual, indeed so far as our subject is concerned the unique, statement that he, Robert de Borron, '*cest conte mist en ystoire par le congie de Sainte Yglise.*'[1]

[1] MSS. Arsénal, 2996, fo. 15 vo.; Riccardiana, 2759, fo. 17, vo.; B.N. 748, fonds Franç. fo. 18.

Read in this light, all the perplexing statements of the closing passages of the *Joseph* become clear:

> Ge n'ose conter ne retraire,
> Ne ie ne le pourroie faire
> Neis se ie feire le voloie,
> Se ie le grant livre n'avoie
> Ou les estoires sunt escrites
> Par les granz clers faites et dites;
> La sunt li grant secré escrit
> Qu'on numme le Graal et dit.
>
> (B.N. 20047, fonds Franç, fo 15 vo.)

The Grail here is distinctly connected with a body of secret teaching contained in a book; the existence of Latin and Greek writings on the subject of Mysticism, and the connection subsisting between Christian and pre-Christian Mystic doctrine and practice, is, as we have seen above, no fiction.

Nor is it a fiction that when Robert undertook the task ·

> Onques retraite estre n'avoit
> La grant estoire dou Graal
> Par nul homme qui fust mortal.
>
> (*Ib.* fo. 55.)

Bleheris had handed down a story of the outward details of the ritual, and the test imposed upon the would-be Initiate, and that story had received an external assimilation to Christian imagery, but no one had grappled boldly with the central and underlying truths conveyed till Borron came upon the scene.

I entirely accept the statement of intention preserved in the verse form, and in the three prose MSS. to which I have referred, it is the sketch of Borron's Grail cycle, *as originally planned*, but he never carried the scheme into effect.

We can only surmise the reasons which led to his change of intention; I think it possible that a change of patron may have had something to do with it. We know that Gautier de Montbéliard went to the Holy Land, and died there. We do not know precisely at what period, previous to his departure, his connection with Borron is to be placed.[1] The constant association, in later works, of the name of Borron with that of so well-known a court favourite as Walter Map, suggests to me the possibility that Borron, too, may have been taken into the royal service. This much is certain, that before he had completed his cycle a disturbing factor, in the shape of a pseudo-historic chronicle, intervened; based upon Wace, the author had developed his Arthurian material in a romantic direction, and Borron, whether of his own volition or at the command of a patron we cannot tell, decided, instead of composing an independent Grail cycle, to incorporate the Grail with the pseudo-historic Arthurian tradition. His intention from the first had, I believe, been to utilise for his Quest section an already existing poem of which Perceval, son of Alain,[2]

[1] Gautier succeeded to the countship of Montbéliard at his father's death in 1183, but only in one MS., B.N. 748, is he given the title of 'Conte.' In every other case Borron alludes to him as 'monseigneur.' I do not understand what Dr. Sommer means when, in his study '*Galahad and Perceval*' (*Modern Philology* (1907), p 13), he says that there is but one MS. in which Gautier de Montbéliard is referred to; he is mentioned in the four MSS. (the verse and the three above named), in which the full '*Joseph*' colophon is given, but only in one is he called 'Conte.'

[2] In the *Perlesvaus*, which I hold to be derived from the same source, we have the same parentage. Recently, in the introduction to Dr. Verdam's edition of the Dutch *Fergus*, I came across the following reference to the famous Alan of Galloway, 'de groote Alanus de Galweia,' son to Rothobaldus, '*constabularius Scotiae*,' whom he succeeded in that office in 1200.—

was the hero; under the influence of his new idea, he contented himself with certain very superficial alterations, which left the discrepancies between the Quest, as indicated by the *Joseph*, and the Quest, as related in the *Perceval*, clearly apparent. We must always remember, however, that Borron's interpretation is based on the hidden and underlying significance of the teaching, the *Queste* upon the objective and popular form which concealed that teaching. To harmonise the two was not, and is not, the task of the uninstructed.

Another point we must remember is that both copies of our text show signs of abridgment; both in the Alain sections, and those relating to Brons, *M.* and *D.* supplement each other, and bear witness to an original fuller than either. Borron may, therefore, have done more to harmonise the versions than we now realise.

But in correspondence with his altered scheme he also changed his expression of intention, substituting for the lengthy colophon of the original *Joseph* the shorter form found in two MSS. of the *Merlin*, and combined, in a measure, with the first in the Riccardiana text. The best version is that of B.N. 747, fonds Franç., which runs thus: *et ie Robert de Borron qui cest livre retrais par l'enseingnement dou livre dou graal, ne doit plus parler d'Artus tant que j'ai parlé d'Alain le fil Bron, et que j'aie devisée par raison por queles choses les poines de Bretaingne furent establies, et einsis com li livres le reconte me covient a parler et*

Francia Pipinus, Brabantia milite cygni,
Anglia Ricardo, Galwidia gaudet Alano.
—*Op. cit.*, p. v.

Considering the connection of Scotland, especially of Galloway, with the Arthurian story, it occurred to me as possible that this 'Great' Alan also might have influenced the tradition.

retraire quels hom il fu, et quels vie il mena, et quels oirs issi de lui, et quel vie si oir menerent, et quant tens sera et leus et ie aurai de celui parlé, si reparlera d'Artus et prendrai les paroles de lui et de sa vie à s'eslection et à son sacre.'[1]

Now I submit that this passage corresponds closely with what must have been the real form of Borron's cycle. The '*poines de Bretaingne*' I take to=*the Wasted Land*, and we have already seen that the removal of this Curse, and the restoration of Vegetation, was the *raison d'être* of the Quest. As we have it, the *poines* or 'enchantments' are only referred to at the beginning and end of the *Perceval*, but their close connection with the task to be achieved is evident, and Borron may well have spoken more fully concerning them. That he did speak more fully concerning Alain and Brons, we have evidence to prove. He tells of Alain's heirs, *i.e.* Perceval and his sister; and when all is said concerning them he returns to Arthur in the *Mort Artus*, which, again, we can prove was originally fuller.

The position is this: viewed from the standpoint of the *Grail* tradition, the cycle is contradictory and inharmonious; viewed from that of the *Arthur*, its unity is demonstrable. The *Merlin* accords with the *Perceval*; the rôle of the seer is the same throughout; moreover, it is in the *Merlin* that we find the allusion to Borron's presumed source, the *Brutus* of Martin of Rochester. The *Perceval* agrees both with the *Merlin* and the *Mort Artus*; on p. 80 we find a direct reference to Merlin's diabolic parentage;[2]

[1] B.N. 747, fonds Franç., fo. 102, vo. The corresponding passage is in Brit. Mus. Add. 32215, fo. 245, vo.

[2] '*ie suis fius a .j. home que tu counois mauvaisement, et il te counoist miels que tu lui, et saces que de sa counissance ne puet a nului buens venir, et dolans puet estre qu'il counoist.*'

on p. 11, in the prophecy of Arthur's conquest of Rome, we have a direct quotation from the chronicle to which also the immediately succeeding description of the glories of Arthur's court is most probably due. The *Mort Artus* crowns the fabric with its unmistakable prose rendering of a verse source; it is Arthurian pseudo-history, pure and simple, without a trace of the later romantic developments. I submit that, in this particular form, the compilation cannot be later than the last decade of the twelfth century; a comparison with other forms of the story, notably the Vulgate *Merlin*, shows that, though based upon the same model, they are distinctly further away from the source. The chronicle form is still discernible, but only faintly so. But the germ of all the later developments is here; the *Joseph* becomes the *Grand Saint Graal*; the *Merlin* develops in both directions, it takes on a romantic *Queste* Suite, and it annexes a considerable portion of the genuine Arthurian historic material; the *Perceval* lends dominant features to the *Queste*; the *Mort Artus* is the most changed; in the final development of the cycle little but the death of the monarch remains, and the setting of that is radically altered. I hold that Borron's cycle was the model on which the prose romances in their cyclic form were constructed, and that those scholars who have placed this group at the head of their suggested table of affiliation are absolutely and entirely right in so doing.[1]

While this study was in the press, indeed, all save the two concluding chapters in print, a short examination of

[1] I think it quite possible that the union of the *Lancelot* and *Perlesvaus* may have been contemporary, or even anterior. *Perlesvaus* derives from the same source as Borron, and a combination of the two romances, minus *Merlin* and *Mort Artus*, seems to me, as I have said above, very probable.

the Borron cycle was published by Dr. Sommer.[1] I was of course unable to refer to it in the body of my work, but since the writer claims a very high authority for the opinions he expresses, and the conclusion at which he has arrived differs fundamentally from that proposed above, I think it well to meet, and categorically answer, the points there raised.

Dr. Sommer roundly denies the Borron authorship alike of the *Perceval* and the *Mort Artus*, basing his argument on the fully admitted discrepancies between these romances and the *Joseph*. On some of the points I consider that the writer lays undue stress, *e.g.* on the confusion between the 'square' Table of the Grail, and the 'Round' Table at Arthur's court (p. 10). It is surely obvious that, once the test of the *Siege Perilous* was located at Arthur's court, the Table must be identified more or less explicitly with the Round Table. That famous and mysterious piece of furniture could not permit a rival. There was no place for two 'magic' Tables.[2] The influence of the chronicle is here clearly evident, there is not so much a confusion, as a change, due to a change of source. The argument from chronology (p. 14) is of course met by the recognition of the true character of the Fisher King. Borron was dealing with symbolic beings, who had 'neither beginning of days, nor end of life,' and the necessity for inventing a genealogy would certainly never have occurred to him! Nor would he have troubled about the relationship, as he well knew there was originally none, and as I have shown above,[3] Perceval could with equal propriety be represented as the

[1] Cf. '*Messire Robert de Borron und der Verfasser des Didot-Perceval*' Halle, 1908.

[2] On this point I have contributed to the 'Willmotte' Festschrift an article entitled '*A Hitherto Unconsidered Aspect of the Round Table.*'

[3] Cf. *supra*, p. 310.

grandson, or the nephew, of the Fisher King. The supposed 'Alain' confusion is, as I have also shown, a proof of knowledge, not of ignorance or carelessness.[1]

For one moment Dr. Sommer and I are in apparent agreement, on p. 39 the critic states with all the added emphasis of larger type, that the *Perceval* is not a homogeneous work: 'denn demselben liegt ein viel früher, etwa um 1200, entstandenes Gedicht zu Grunde, in welchem weder von Merlin und Blaise, noch von Alain und Bron, die Rede ist, und in dem Perceval nicht der Sohn Alains, der Enkel des Bron, sondern, im Einklang mit allen anderen Versionen der Graalqueste, der Neffe eines anderen, im Zeitalter Artus, also im fünften Jahrhundert lebenden, Fischerkonigs war';[2] Dr. Sommer goes on to say

[1] Cf. *supra*, p. 280

[2] In view of the possibility of the theory of a verse original for the *Perceval* being accepted, and the question of priority mooted, I think it well to place the following dates on record. I copied the Modena text in the spring of 1906, and when preparing it for the press noticed the verse forms, and came to the conclusion that the romance was a *mise-en-prose* of an early poem. I mentioned this to Mr. Nutt, who incorporated the suggestion in a somewhat premature announcement of the appearance of the second volume of my studies, issued in the autumn of that year. In the spring of 1907, having typed the text, I submitted it to M. Paul Meyer, drawing his attention to the passages in which I thought I had found indications of rhyme. So soon as the text was in 'slip' proof I attempted a general reconstruction, which I showed to M. Bédier, as mentioned in chapter ii. I also discussed the question with one or two others interested in these matters, and by the autumn of 1907 there were certainly six persons, besides myself, who were *au courant* of the surmised discovery. Dr. Sommer was in Paris in the late autumn of that year, and when he announced his intention of going to Modena, a mutual friend, with my permission, informed him of the advanced state of my studies; the *Perceval* text was then practically ready for publication, but my evidence on other points was incomplete. It has taken me fully three years' study to collect and arrange my material.

that the contents of this poem, *minus* the section dealing with the '*Enfances*,'[1] can still clearly be discerned in both MSS., and that all that is related of Perceval, from his arrival at court to his winning the Grail, is drawn from this source. The introductory matter is based upon indications found in the *Merlin*.

In the foregoing pages I have shown that I too believe in a verse source for the *Perceval*, and it would have been of especial interest to know whether Dr. Sommer's views were based upon the same passages, phrases, and suggestions of rhyme as had struck me, whether he would suggest the same forms in reconstruction; had two critics, working independently, produced similar results, the cumulative effect of the evidence would have been of the greatest value. Unfortunately, we are left absolutely in the dark as to the reasons which have led Dr. Sommer to adopt this view. In a footnote, certainly, he refers the reader to a passage cited on p. 10, a part of the *Siege Perilous* adventure, but curiously enough, *not* that which contains the best verse forms—a footnote, and no more! But surely the determination of a verse source for this much debated romance was a matter of sufficient importance to be treated in detail? Or had Dr. Sommer really no further proofs to offer? If so, how did he come to his conclusion as to the contents of the poem? I fear that here we are only dealing with the writer's view of what, according to his theory of Grail development, *ought* to have been the contents! How was it Dr. Sommer did not see in the attempts which he must of course have made at reconstruction, that the passages dealing with Alain and Brons are precisely among those which yield the best results?

[1] If my scheme be correct, the *Enfances* was never in the poem at all, any more than in the *Perlesvaus*.

And why fix 1200 as the presumable date of the poem, and at the same time state (p. 39 n.) that the author knew both Chrétien, and *Wauchier de Denain*? Here Dr. Sommer is relying upon Hoffmann's dissertation, but Hoffmann wrote before the appearance of M. Paul Meyer's study upon Wauchier, and had no knowledge of the date to be assigned to that writer. Dr. Sommer's use of the orm 'Wauchier de Denain' shows that he knows M. Meyer's work, for it was he who taught us this form; he must therefore know that Wauchier wrote in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, his works fall within the decade 1220-30, and there is sound reason for holding the *Perceval* to have been one of his later works; what then does Dr. Sommer mean by this self-contradictory statement? He cannot have it both ways: either his poem was written well on in the thirteenth century, or it is not derived in any way from Wauchier. Nor are the opening passages simply amplifications of the *Merlin*, their verbal parallels are to be found in Wace, while the verse forms in the passages dealing with Merlin are clear, *i.e.* he too was in the poem. The date of the *Perceval* Dr. Sommer places at about 1230 (p. 39), and he holds that it was compiled with the view of reinstating that hero in the position of Grail winner, from which he had been deposed in favour of Galahad. Now the Grail being what it was, this is simply impossible; to depose Galahad, the creation of an imperative demand, at once psychological and literary, in favour of Perceval who had been deliberately set aside as failing to fulfil the essential conditions of the rôle, and that at a date when the *Lancelot-Galahad* romantic development had, like Aaron's rod, swallowed up all its rivals, is unthinkable. To state such a problem fairly is to refute it. With Galahad it was emphatically a case of '*J'y suis, j'y*

reste,' and, Wagner notwithstanding, he holds his position to-day!

The *Mort Artus*, we are told (p. 40), is taken from another source, and had nothing to do with the poem; this source Dr. Sommer holds to have been the original *Merlin*, from which both the Vulgate form and part of the unique *Merlin* B. N. 337, fonds Franç, were drawn. Whether the critic holds this section to be by the same hand as that of the compiler of the *Perceval* is not quite clear.

Now had Dr. Sommer shown any signs of having detected the verse forms in the *M. A.*, I could have partly understood the error into which he has fallen; the *Merlin*, B. N. 337, certainly knew and used a rhymed version of Arthur's feats, though this was in mono-rhymed Alexandrines, not octo-syllabic verse,[1] but curiously enough, the critic who has discovered verse forms underlying the *Perceval* has failed to detect the far more salient examples in the *Mort Artus*. So long as we had before us only the *D.* text, with its condensed, confused, and highly elliptic version, the fact of the use of a *Brut* might very well pass unperceived, indeed only a critic of exceptional acumen

[1] Dr. Freymond drew attention to this long ago, publishing the passages in question; I also published certain extracts in the course of an argument with Dr. Gaster on the probable source of the *Merlin* (*Folk-Lore*, vol. xvii. p. 230) quoting from a very full abstract of the text, which I had made for my own use, being unable to obtain Dr. Freymond's Study. I have frequently made references to, and quoted from, this MS., the interest and importance of which is very generally recognised, and take this opportunity of explaining how it is that, in doing so, I have never referred to Dr. Freymond, whose Study is otherwise very generally used. I believe M. Paul Meyer contemplates the inclusion of this MS. in the publications of *Société des Anciens Textes Français* It would be a publication of immense value to Arthurian students.

could have surmised, and he could not have proved, the fact. But with the Modena text before them I cannot understand how both Hoffmann and Sommer overlooked the borrowings from Wace. The lines '*vous sautent aux yeux*'; the *Brut*, both in the French and the English form, is a text easily available, and one which should be familiar to all Arthurian students. I do not see how either of the above named writers can here be exonerated from the reproach of carelessness. Indeed, to my mind the whole of this study bears signs of haste and incompleteness. Dr. Sommer had already made up his mind that the prose *Perceval* was a late text (p. 39); he thought he saw signs of verse forms; the *Mort Artus* dealt with a different branch of the Arthurian tradition; he hastily sketched what seemed a possible solution, and published, without due examination of his material as a whole. Yet he knew the question to be an important one, and one which required the most minute and careful examination (p. 7), surely it deserved a fuller treatment than could be compressed within 53 pp., a large proportion of which was to be devoted to excerpts from the *Merlin*?

On p. 41 Dr. Sommer finally claims that he has satisfactorily solved 'eine der "*merkwürdigsten und schwierigsten Fragen*" der mittelalterlichen Litteraturgeschichte"; I fear he will find few to endorse his self-congratulatory verdict, the solution he proposes is at once too improbable in itself, too loosely constructed, and too devoid of evidential basis to support so weighty a conclusion. Indeed, I very much doubt whether, in the fragmentary character of the material at our disposal, we should any of us claim certainty, or finality, for our theories. With regard to my own theory, as set forth in these pages, I do not claim that the evidence is complete; with regard to the Grail I doubt

whether it ever can be; the very nature of the questions dealt with, the secrecy, and the largely oral method of transmission, militate against the complete solution So far as the Borron cycle is concerned, we see now that both the existing MSS. are abridgments, and that the original work must have been considerably fuller;[1] nor do we

[1] I insist upon this point because Dr. Sommer lays great stress upon the shortened form of the *Merlin* section of the *M* text. Now both the *Perceval* and the *Mort Artus* of this and the *D.* are abridgments. It is only to be expected that the *Merlin* found in conjunction with them would, *if really forming part of a homogeneous cycle*, be treated in the same manner; and that in *M.* the abridgment should be well and intelligently carried out is only what we should expect from so good and careful a copyist as the scribe of Modena assuredly was. My own view is that much of Borron's *Merlin* material came, not from a *Merlin* romance, but from a chronicle, the 'prophecies' as found in Geoffrey may well have been there. It seems to me that Dr. Sommer in his interest in the more familiar part, natural enough to the editor of the *Merlin*, has neglected the *ensemble*. I feel sure that Borron, even under the influence of the chronicle source, can never have intended Arthur to be the occupant of the *lit vuit*; the fact is that we have the Round Table only in its latest and most material form, and there were stories and traditions connected with it of which but the faintest traces remain. Also in comparing MS. readings we must bear in mind the element of chance; much depended on the MSS. at the disposal of the copyists, and on the taste of their patron, but still more upon the individuality of the scribe, and his familiarity, outside the texts before him, with the material with which he was dealing. Certain variants, such as the relationship between the Fisher-King and the Grail winner; the existence of three Grail kings, Pelles, Pellinor, and Alain; the consequent recognition of Perceval's father as a king, all ultimately derive from the knowledge of the copyist; *independent writers possessed of the same tradition may well have independently made identical corrections*, certain passages in the light of knowledge possessed by each striking each as faulty. We shall do well to bear in mind the existence of this element. In my opinion the grave fault of Dr. Sommer's work is that it is a criticism of *words* only; ideas he leaves utterly out of the enquiry, the

know how much of the verse form capable of recovery belongs to the original poem, how much to Borron's emended version. There is still much to be done, but in this latter case I think that a careful study of the *Perlesvaus*, Wauchier, Gerbert, and the *Merlin*,[1] 337, might enable us to form a fairly correct idea of the contents of that earlier poem.

For the moment all I claim is that the determination of the true character of the Grail legend; of the probability of genuine 'Borron' authorship of the cycle; and the evidence as to the sources utilised; are useful stones towards the reconstruction of the complicated edifice of Arthurian romance; they may even prove to be foundation stones, who can tell? It is in the hope that they may indeed be such that I submit these Studies to the consideration of my fellow workers.

net result of such a method can never be more than superficial; he has dug out a certain amount of raw material, of more or less value, but in his hands raw material it remains.

[1] Cf. vol i. p. 264 note.

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